

THE MUHĀJIRAT AND THE  
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF KERMANSHAH,  
1915-1917

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to study the events of the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah from summer 1915 to winter 1917. These events could be considered as a nationalistic movement of the Iranian people for protecting the independence and integrity of Iran during the First World War.

It commenced with the formation of Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's cabinet and his failure to maintain the proper neutrality of Iran in the war, which had already been violated by the belligerent countries from both political and military aspects.

Due to the harshness of Russian and British policy in Iran, public opinion was totally against them and the Central Powers' propaganda inflamed this attitude intensively.

The revision in 1915 of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 had made the British and Russian Governments reluctant to assist the Iranian Government. This attitude caused the Iranian Government to incline towards the opposition.

The increase of the Central Powers' influence put the Russian and British interests in Iran and its neighbouring countries in jeopardy. Therefore, the Russian troops advanced towards Tehran and caused the Muhājirat, an exodus of Iranian nationalists from Tehran to Qom in protest against the Allied intentions in Iran.

They organised a committee for the defence of the country's independence and believed that the Shah and government in Tehran were under Allied pressure and not able to take any decision; therefore, they formed a government in Kermanshah to control the country's affairs and to conclude agreements with the Central Powers.

They also formed an army which, with the assistance of the Germans and Turks, confronted Russian troops a few times but were defeated and retreated to Turkish territory. They returned to Iran in company with Turkish troops and ruled in the western part of Iran until the occupation of Baghdad by British forces.

To My Mother  
and  
My Friends



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## ABBREVIATIONS

Full details of these works will be found in the bibliography.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Blücher                 | Wipert von Blücher, <u>Zeitenwende in Iran.</u>  |
| Daulatābādī             | Yahyā Daulatābādī, <u>Hayāt Yahyā</u> , 4 vols.  |
| F.O.                    | British Foreign Office.  |
| Gehrke, I<br>Gehrke, II | Ulrich Gehrke, <u>Persien in der Deutschen Orientpolitik<br/>Während des Ersten Weltkrieges</u> , Vol. I in 2 parts. |
| I.F.O.                  | Iranian Foreign Office.  |
| I'zām Qudsī             | Hasan I'zām Qudsī, <u>Kitāb-i Khāṭirāt-i Man yā Tārīkh-i<br/>Šadsālah-i Īrān.</u>                                    |
| Kasravī                 | Aḥmad Kasravī, <u>Tārīkh-i Hījdah Sālah-i Āzarbāyjān.</u>  |
| Mukhbir us-Salṭanah     | Mukhbir us-Salṭanah, <u>Khāṭirāt va Khaṭarāt.</u>  |
| Sipihr                  | Aḥmad 'Alī Sipihr, Muvarikh ud-Daulah, <u>Īrān dar<br/>Jāng-i Buzūrg 1914-1918.</u>                                  |

# TRANSLITERATION

The system of transliteration used in this thesis is given below.

Short vowels are transliterated a, i, u, and long vowels ā, ī, ū.

Diphthongs are transliterated au and ay. The definite article of Arabic is transliterated ul- or as sounded when the lām is assimilated. Place names are given their usual English spelling wherever possible.

|   |    |   |    |
|---|----|---|----|
| ب | b  | ط | t  |
| پ | p  | ظ | z  |
| ت | t  | ع | '  |
| ث | s  | غ | gh |
| ج | j  | ف | f  |
| ح | ch | ق | q  |
| خ | h  | ك | k  |
| د | kh | گ | g  |
| ذ | d  | ل | l  |
| ر | z  | م | m  |
| ز | r  | ن | n  |
| ژ | z  | و | v  |
| س | zh | ه | h  |
| ش | s  | ی | y  |
| ص | sh | ة | '  |
| ض | s  |   |    |
| ظ | z  |   |    |

Izāfah is shown by -i or -yi.

## DATING

Most dates in this thesis are given according to the Christian and/or hijrī qamarī calendars. When a date is given in hijrī shamsī, it is designated by the letters H.S. after the date; shāhanshāhī dates are indicated by Sh.



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES

In the modern history of Iran, the First World War can particularly be considered one of the richest periods from the aspect of documentary materials. The direct involvement of belligerent countries in Iran during the years 1914-1918 created numerous volumes of official documents in those countries.

For detailed research in this period, one needs a knowledge of many languages other than Persian: English, Russian, German and Turkish, the tongues of the belligerent countries directly involved in Iran's affairs; French, which was the official language of the Iranian Foreign Office in communicating with other countries and vice versa; and even Swedish, as the reports and memoirs of the Swedish officers who advised the Iranian gendarmerie forces are of great value, especially those which deal with the war in Iran.

In this thesis I have attempted to study and cover as many different materials on the subject as possible. Apart from the Iranian and British documents and sources, some German and Russian documents, and translations of them, have been used. Unfortunately, it was not possible to discuss the subject of this thesis from the Turkish, Russian, Swedish, and to some extent, German points of view. However, this is meant to be a beginning for further study.

The British documents are available in London at the Public Record Office, India Office, War Office and Central Register of Archives, the last dealing with the private papers of British officials. Regarding the documents in the first three offices, most of the reports are usually copies of each other, but often with different

numbers, titles, dates and sometimes varied language, although the sense is the same, which has taken a considerable time to sort out and often led to great confusion. For the purposes of this thesis, I have generally relied on the documents in the Public Record Office for matters relating to all three organisations.

It is well-known that the British Public Record Office is not allowed to publish many of the documents it holds, even after thirty, fifty or even one hundred years. Due to the fact that the percentage of unpublished documents is not known, one cannot estimate how much of the subject one has covered according to the British documents. As to the reports, in many cases some parts or sentences have been omitted, and this sometimes produces ambiguity of meaning or contents of the reports. However, the documents do indicate the British policy on political, economic and military matters in Iran and the various attitudes of the British authorities dealing with Iranian affairs. Although they are most useful and offer a vast vision of the situation in Iran at the time, it is obvious that they indicate and express the British point of view.

Generally speaking, the British press represented and supported their government's views and policy regarding its foreign relations, particularly during the war. "The Times" and "The Near East" are no exceptions. However, they are very helpful in offering a general idea of the war, particularly the latter, the main intention of which was concerned with the situation in the Middle East and Iran. Its commentaries on Iranian affairs are sometimes very interesting and useful.

Regarding the British published sources, two authors are very important. The first is Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador



in Russia during the war and the author of My Mission to Russia, in two volumes. Although there is not much about Anglo-Russian relations concerning Iran in his memoirs, it is nevertheless of great importance when dealing with the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1915. Buchanan has made clear the intentions of Russia and Britain toward Iran.

Sir Percy Sykes, the general officer commanding the South Persian Rifles from 1916-1921, could be considered an important witness concerning the situation in Iran during the war. He is the author of A History of Persia in two volumes. Although he concentrates on the southern part of Iran, he offers a rather well-described vision of the general situation of the country at the time. As to the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah, he neither considers the movement from the Iranian point of view, nor gives a balanced account of it. As he was acting against the anti-Allied movements in Iran, it should not be surprising that he considers the Iranian movement against the Allies simply as a German plot. Although Sykes could not conceal the public hatred of the Russians and British in Iran, he blamed this on the Russians for their maltreatment and left unsaid the British mispolicy in Iran.

There are a large number of other publications in English about the First World War in the Middle East, and particularly in Mesopotamia, which inevitably refer to the events in Iran, such as The Great War by H. W. Wilson and J. A. Hammerton; Mesopotamia Campaign by F.J. Moberly; Loyalties Mesopotamia by Sir Arnold Wilson. The Middle East in World Affairs by George Lenczowski is very useful concerning general events in the Middle East and particularly about the events in Iran. Modern Iran by Peter Avery contains a more sympathetic view of the Iranian movement during the war.

Two volumes of documents edited by Ulrich Gehrke under the title Persien in der Deutschen Orientpolitik während des Ersten Weltkrieges are totally devoted to official reports, documents and letters of German diplomats and military advisors in Iran during the war. It is a splendid work, with many entries relevant to the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah. It offers a considerable number of official documents concerning German and Iranian relations and the attitudes and policy of the Germans and Turks in Iran.

Zeitenwende in Iran is the memoirs of Wipert von Blücher, the German officer who served as an advisor in Iran and later became the secretary of the German Ambassador in Kermanshah during the period of the National Government in Kermanshah. He gives an important account of the situation in Kermanshah from political and military aspects and of the relations between Turkey, Germany and Iran.

As to Russian sources, I have had access only to some newspapers published during the war and to translations of some articles from Russian newspapers concerning Iranian affairs, both from the Iranian Foreign Office Archives.

Some lectures read at Harvard University in November 1962, by L. I. Miroshnikov, under the title Iran in World War I, represents a Russian source devoted to the subject of Iran during the war. The author offers a useful introduction concerning the sources about the war in Iran and comments on some of them. He discusses the Russian and British imperialistic policy towards Iran. He expresses his opinion about the anti-Allied movement, saying that not all anti-British and anti-Russian uprisings were the result of intrigues and propaganda by Germany and Turkey. He strongly criticises Sir Percy Sykes, who paid little attention to Russian efforts during the war in Iran, and



points out that the British had mistrusted the Russians despite their alliance and friendly relations.

The Iranian sources can be classified in three categories, the first of which, primary sources, may be further subdivided into the following three groups: 1) the Iranian Foreign Office Archives; 2) the memoirs and diaries of those who took part in the movement or were witnesses; 3) the newspapers and pamphlets published in Iran during the time. The second category includes books and articles concerning Iran during the war, and the third a series of interviews of twenty-four people who had participated in the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah or were witnesses to these events, which I conducted in Iran during 1977-78.

The foundation of the historiography of the modern period is often based on the papers and documents which are released after a certain length of time by a government and are accessible to the public through special administration. There is no such administration in Iran. In spite of recent moves to improve the situation, there are only a few persons who actually deal with the archives. As a matter of fact, the Archives and Record Office of the Iranian Foreign Office are located in the same place. Therefore, it is difficult to receive permission to study these documents. Admission is totally dependent on the circumstances.

The documents have never been properly classified and catalogued. However, each year has been divided into 66 subjects, each of which deals with the Foreign Office's relations with the other Iranian ministries and foreign countries. Each subject contains some cartons and each carton many files. The files usually contain up to 60 letters each, the subject of which is briefly mentioned on the files. But

even with this arrangement, documents are often mixed up and not filed properly. It is a matter of great disappointment to see the most precious documents of the country turning to dust. It is hoped that in the very near future some measures will be taken on this matter.

The years 1914-1915 could be considered as a period of remarkable freedom of speech and publication in Iran. About thirty-seven newspapers with various political attitudes were published<sup>1</sup>, eighteen of them in Tehran and the rest in other cities. They inveighed against and criticised vigourously political parties, politicians and authorities, either foreign or Iranian. The day of the Muhājirat was the end of freedom and except for a very few, mostly pro-Allied publications, the rest were suspended. However, they offer a rather well-conceived idea of the political and economic situation of the country and a great deal of information about the current events of the time, particularly the period during which they had freedom. They are very useful and helpful in understanding the condition of Iran during the time with which this study is concerned.

Unfortunately, from the nineteen newspapers published in other cities, almost nothing survives but their names and occasionally an article which was reported or quoted in the books. As for the newspapers published in Tehran, a search of the Majlis, Milli, Malik and University of Tehran Libraries failed to turn up a complete series of nearly all of them, including the famous one "Naubahār".

Fortunately, most of the Muhājirīn were educated people and had the freedom and tendency to write; in fact many of them were editors of newspapers, writers, poets or politicians. They produced a

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1. Sipihr, 229.



considerable number of memoirs and diaries about their lives and the situation in the country; in comparison with other periods of Iranian history, this is an unique collection and provided this study with a vast wealth of source material. But one must exercise great caution in dealing with their attitudes; although they expressed their personal opinions, political attitudes and interests, many contradictory views about these matters arise. Of course most of them were very careful and wise in their writing so that there would not be any problems later on.

Īrān dar Jang-i Buzurg, by Ahmad 'Alī Sipihr, Muvarrikh ud-Daulah, is a collection of his diaries and memoirs of some Iranian and foreign diplomats. The most important point of this work is that the author had access to many documentary papers at the time. Sipihr was working as the first secretary in the German Embassy at Tehran and had close relations with most of the Iranian politicians. His attitudes and opinions are very interesting and offer a conception of the situation in the country and the policy in Iran of the belligerent countries, particularly the Germans. Although it is a very useful work, his tendency towards the Germans is noticeable.

'Alī Muḥammad and Yaḥyā Daulatābādī, two brothers who took part in the Muhājirat, are two famous Iranian politicians of the time. The memoirs of the former, who was a leader of the Moderate Party, have been published in "Vahīd" magazine. He offers a view of the general political condition of the country at the time and the activities of the Moderate Party. His main attention concentrates on the friction between the Moderate and Democrat Parties and the rivalry between politicians.



Yahyā, whose sympathy lay with the Democrat Party, has written four volumes of memoirs which offer a vast vision of the history of Iran from the reign of Nāṣir ud-Dīn Shāh Qājār to the rise of the Pahlavī dynasty. Regarding the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah, he was involved from the beginning and was one of the most influential politicians.

The memoirs and diaries of Ḥusain Samī'ī, Adīb us-Saltānah, and Aman Allāh Ardalān, 'Izz ul-Mamālik, who were members of the Majlis and had participated in the Muhājirat and become ministers of the National Government of Kermanshah, have been published in a book under the title Avvalīn Qiyām Muqaddas-i Millī dar Jang-i Bayn ul-Milalī Avval. The memoirs of the former consist of about thirty-two pages, with a very brief description of events. Ardalān's memoirs occupy the rest of the book, about 86 pages, with rather more detail than his friend. His memoirs have also been published in books by Sipīhr and I'zām Qudsī and in "Khāṭirāt-i Vahīd". Ardalān refers to some articles of constitutional law and a full debate of a session of the Majlis on the Russian ultimatum of 1911. There is no notion about any agreement between the parties and Germany, or the National Government and the Turks and Germans. Ardalān obtained a list of about 122 persons who had taken part in the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah. This list includes the members of the Majlis, 'ulamā', government authorities, nationalists and gendarmerie officers.

Safar-i Muhājirat, by Riḏā 'Alī Dīvānbaygī, concentrates on the writer's activities during the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah. He worked in the Iranian Foreign Ministry as secretary

in the section on Russian affairs. He joined the Muhājirīn and was appointed envoy to Kurdestan and then Kermanshah, from which he gives an idea of events.

Kitāb-i Khātirāt-i Man yā Raushan Shudan-i Tārīkh Sad Sālah, by Husain I'zām Qudsī, I'zām ul-Vuzāra', gives full details on the current situation of the country and his daily memoirs during the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah. He has included the memoirs of Ardalān and Navvāb Razavī, a member of the Majlis from Yazd. He has expressed his views and criticised and commented on the matter.

Tārīkh-i Nihzat by Mudīr Hallāj and Tārīkh-i Vaṭān Parastān Isfahān va Bakhtiyārī by Dānishvar, Mujāhid us-Sultān, are both written by men who took part in the Muhājirat and record their experiences and memoirs during the time.

Vaqā'i'-i Gharb-i Īrān dar Jang-i Avval-i Jahānī az Sha'bān 1333 tā Sha'bān 1334, by Riṣāqūlī Qā'immaqāmī, as the title indicates, is concerned with the events in the west of Iran during the First World War from June 1915 to June 1916. He was a gendarmerie officer in the Burūjird division in Lūristān in the west of Iran and acted as interpreter for the Swedish officers in the force. He also had access to information about the organisation of the gendarmerie and took part in many events, especially battles such as Bīd-i Surkh. He offers a rather story-like interpretation of events. As he was in the west and away from the central part of the country he has made some rather big errors about events in the central part of Iran; for instance, the fight of Rubāṭ Karīm, according to him, happened several days before the Muhājirat, on 25th Zī Hījjaḥ 1333/4 November 1915; in fact, the Rubāṭ Karīm battle had happened almost 37 days after the



day of the Muhājirat, which would be 14 Šafar 1333/22 December 1915. He also recorded the day of the Muhājirat as 4th Muharram instead of the 7th, but he received this date from a memoir of Ya'qūb Anvār, one of the members of the Majlis, which was published years later in "Iṭṭalā'āt-i Haftagī", a Tehran magazine. However, his book, with some caution, is useful on general points.

Tārīkh-i Zhāndārmārī-yi Īrān, by Lieutenant-Colonel Parvīz

Afsar, offers information about the foundation of the gendarmerie force in Iran and describes the system and administration of the force and its divisions in the country. He also gives the names of Swedish and Iranian officers and a general outline of each division's activities, particularly during the war against rebels, tribes and the Russian forces.

The other very important sources which should be mentioned as of great value are Tārīkh-i Hījdah Sālah-i Āzarbayjān, by Aḥmad Kasravī, who can undoubtedly be considered as the only Iranian historian at the time dealing with the events in the country; Khāṭirat va Khaṭarāt by Mukhbīr us-Salṭanah and Fārs dar Jang-i Bayn ul-Milal by Rukn ud-Dīn Ādamiyyat can also be considered as primary sources.

It had been planned to follow the trace of the Muhājirīn and to try to meet any persons still living in the cities through which the Muhājirīn had passed who had witnessed the events. In 1978 this intention took place and the result of this journey, with all its difficulties and problems (which could be a separate story and report), was twenty-four interviews, and many photographs, slides and films. It was a fine experience and a very useful journey. The most important part of this journey was the opportunity to meet two ministers of the National Government of Kermanshah. Mr. 'Izz ul-Mamālik Ardālān (a

senator at the time of the interview) was the Minister for Trade and Public Utilities in the National Government of Kermanshah. His memoirs have frequently been published. He kindly granted me a visit and spoke about the past and his activities during the events of the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah. In answer to the question why he had not mentioned anything about the treaty between the National Government of Kermanshah and Germany, he stated that he could not remember that there was any; neither did he have any idea about the attempts on Nizām us-Saltānah's life. Due to the circumstances, he did not wish to say more than he had already written in his memoirs about the policies of Russia, Britain, Turkey and Germany in Iran during the war.

Mr. Muḥammad 'Alī Māfi, the son of Nizām us-Saltānah, who regretfully died in the late months of 1979, very kindly granted me several visits to meet him and offered details on his memoirs and assisted with some sources on the subject. He was the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the cabinet of the National Government of Kermanshah. He offered an account of his father's life and some of his father's letters concerning his life during that time.

Details of other persons who were interviewed are listed in Appendix II.



## INTRODUCTION

The Iranian uprising as a national movement occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in the Tobacco event. It was also the first general agitation against foreign influence in Iran. The union and participation of the people against the concession of tobacco gave the Iranian people a great and magnificent experience. They realized that there was no power greater than the unification of the people through which they would be able to control the fate and future of themselves and their country. They had been observing the gradual foreign domination over political, economic and administrative affairs of the country. They were witnessing the resources of the country being put up to auction by the conclusion of agreements, conventions and concessions. When there was nothing left, the other sources of the country's income, such as customs duties, were mortgaged in order to obtain some loans for the expenses of Muzaffar ud-Din Shāh's journey to European countries, which was in fact completely wasteful.

The British and Russian competition, aiming at extending their domination, had increased rapidly. They received all their privileges from the Iranian Government by using force, threatening and bribing the corrupt but influential people in the country. The British and Russian policy in Iran was based on one obtaining more privileges than the other, and consequently the collision between the two powers' interests in Iran and their activities and propaganda against each other offered the Iranians a clear vision of both powers' intentions towards Iran. The Iranian governments had always endeavoured to balance the British and Russian policy in Iran against each other for the survival of the country's independence.

The progress of political awareness in Iran led the people to the Constitutional Revolution. Although the movement was against the despotic system of government which was in fact considered to be the main reason for foreign interference in the economic and political affairs of the country, in spite of all the nationalists' efforts, the result of the Constitutional Revolution had little impact on the economic grip of the British and Russians on Iran. Consequently, the political measures against both powers' domination could not achieve a desirable result.

The Convention of 1907, between the British and Russian Governments, in which the territory of Iran was divided into spheres of influence, brought both powers to friendly co-operation. It was an ominous event and a great alarm to the Iranian people, particularly to the nationalists, which indicated that the independence and future of Iran was in serious jeopardy.

The Convention was like a nightmare to the Iranian people. In spite of the fact that according to the Convention both powers had undertaken to respect the integrity and independence of Iran, nevertheless, thenceforth the strangling of Iran had begun. The Iranians strongly protested against the agreement and the British and Russian policy in Iran, but to no avail. Both powers' bargaining over Iran continued. The more they increased their pressure on the country, the nationalists' fight became harder. They were too weak to stand against two superior powers in the world at that time; nevertheless, they desperately continued to fight against them in any possible way.

The Iranian Government's and nationalists' efforts for improving the situation of the country were neutralised by both powers' interference, conspiracy and threatening; for instance, the return of



Muhammad 'Alī Shāh and the revolt of Šamad Khān in Azarbaijan are examples of two plans to weaken the Iranian Government.

Once more, the nationalists tried their utmost to loosen the economic yoke of the British and Russians by reorganising the country's financial administration, but this led to Shuster's event and ended in the Russian ultimatum of 1911. This Russian action suspended the second Majlis and nullified all the nationalists' endeavours by dismissing Shuster and his mission.

The Russians thenceforth openly took over the northern part of Iran and followed a policy of colonisation in their sphere of influence. The entrance of Russian troops into the Iranian provinces of Azarbaijan, Gilan, Mazandaran and Khurasan, down to Qazvin, by no means indicated a friendly attitude of the Russians towards Iran. They occupied Tabriz and hanged several nationalists, among them Siqat ul-Islām, one of the 'ulamā'. The harshness of the Russians in Khurasan went beyond expectation. The bombardment of Imām Reżā's Shrine, from the Iranian people's point of view, was the worst violation of Iranian dignity.

In addition to all these actions, hundreds of Russian subjects emigrated to the north of Iran, disregarding Iranian authority, in order to settle as landowners. The Russian consuls in fact ruled in the cities; they collected taxes, discharged or appointed governors and officials in the cities. The British representatives frequently acknowledged and reported that the Russians had gone too far.

But the British policy in Iran was based on receiving privileges, if not more, at least as many as the Russians had gained by political pressure or military operations and which caused the Russians a great deal of expense, casualties and of course extreme Iranian hatred. If the British Government did not actually encourage the Russians to take



some measures, they would certainly not desire to irritate them. Therefore, they sometimes supported the Russian demands from the Iranian Government, or otherwise kept silent about the Russians' activities in Iran. On some occasions when the Russians aroused British public opinion against their actions in Iran, or when British interests would probably be damaged, the British Government reminded the Russian Government of their convention of 1907.

### Ahmad Shāh's Coronation

Iran's situation at the commencement of the great war indicated a state of complete turmoil. The country had been ruled by the regency of Naṣīr ul-Mulk because Ahmad Shāh was too young to reign. Since the Russian ultimatum in 1911, which caused the closure of the Majlis, Naṣīr ul-Mulk had governed the country; Kasravī described him as "a touchy man who had done nothing during his few years' regency but compromise with two neighbours and limit the people's freedom and activities."<sup>1</sup> Naṣīr ul-Mulk was in fact one of the Iranian politicians who had no hope in a future for Iran. In the summer of 1914, he was in Europe and he despatched a telegram to the prime minister, stating that by then the Shah was 18 years old and the government should execute chapter 36 of the Iranian Constitution, in which the Shah, at the age of 18, would be entitled to take power in the country.<sup>2</sup> Although there were some ideas that the Shah was only 17 years old<sup>3</sup>, it was announced that the coronation would take place in a few days.

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1. Kasravī, 590.

2. Sipihr, 19.

3. Ibid., 19-20.

A hasty preparation for celebrating the young Shah's coronation started all over the country. In spite of tremendous difficulties with both the Iranian Government and the people involved, nevertheless they did their utmost to celebrate the coronation as splendidly as possible. On 21st July, 1914, the Shah was crowned in the audience of foreign representatives and the Iranian 'ulamā', nobles, politicians and other notables. It was considered to be a demonstration of the integrity and independence of Iran. Three days of celebration took place in the cities. Due to the occupation of Tabriz by the Russian troops, the celebration at Tabriz was magnificent and lasted six days. The people tried passionately to show the spirit of nationalism and their determination to stand against foreign domination.

### The Great War in Iran

On 2nd August 1914, the Great War broke out. The belligerent countries in Europe, one after another, declared war on each other. It was obvious that the war would extend to other continents. In Asia, the crucial area was the Middle Eastern countries, of which Iran was one. The condition of Iran at the time was described by Sir Percy Sykes as:

No power was less prepared to meet the obligation and sacrifices imposed by the world war than Persia and no power exhibited such impotence in protecting its boundaries and its subjects. 1

Nevertheless, the commencement of the First World War was delightful news for Iranian people, particularly the nationalists. It brought hope for the nation to rise once more for freedom from the Russian

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1. Sir Percy Sykes, Persia (Oxford, 1922), 154.



and British yoke and to protect the country's independence. Although there were many people from all classes in Iranian society, especially nobles, politicians, merchants and tribal chiefs, who had already changed their nationality to Russian or British, or were thinking of doing so, the nationalists had been desperately struggling to continue the national spirit and to protect their homeland. They were well aware that if they did not take the opportunity which the European war had produced, there would be no chance for Iran's independence in the future.

Concerning the situation in Iran, the Iranian Government took under consideration various positions which Iran might choose in the war. 'Alā' us-Salṭānah's cabinet was replaced by that of Mustaufī ul-Mamālik. He was charged with declaring Iran's policy in the war. The lowest expectation of the Iranian nationalists from the government was that the independence of the country would be guaranteed and foreign interference be prevented.

Mustaufī ul-Mamālik, on 18th August 1914, introduced his cabinet to the Shah and brought about the means for the election of the third Majlis. The main purpose of Mustaufī's programme was to declare the neutrality of Iran in the war. Therefore he opened a series of negotiations with belligerent legations at Tehran to find out the reaction of their governments to the neutrality of Iran. The Iranian Government had to confront a great number of difficulties in order to maintain this policy. The most important obstacle was the presence of Russian troops on Iranian territory, especially in Azarbaijan, which, in the case of a declaration of war between Russia and Turkey, would be a battleground. The prospect of a disaster was imminent in the region of Azarbaijan. The Turks had already concentrated considerable

troops on the Irano-Turkish border. Among the Kurdish tribes in the region a movement of tension had appeared. On the other hand, the Russians also had increased their troops in Azarbaijan and backed the Armenians. The Iranian Government was well aware of the delicacy of the situation and was determined to delay a collision between both sides on Iranian territory; therefore, through diplomatic connections with the Turks, it was understood that they would respect the neutrality of Iran, but this did not conceal their anxiety about the presence of Russian troops in Iran, particularly in Azarbaijan, which was so close to the Turkish border.<sup>1</sup> The government was perfectly aware that the key point of Iran's neutrality was in the hands of the Allies, particularly the Russians; therefore, in the continuation of negotiations with Russian and British ministers in meetings in Tehran concerning the withdrawal of Russian troops from Iran, Mustaufi ul-Mamālik explained the situation and drew the ministers' attention to the point that the government was determined to maintain neutrality and indicated that the situation in the region of the Turkish border was very critical. The Prime Minister appealed that it was time for the Russians to fulfil their frequent promises and to recall their troops from Iran. He added that the government intended to despatch the Crown Prince to escort some forces to Tabriz in order to appease the tension in Azarbaijan. When the Russian Minister expressed his doubts about the Turkish intention to respect the neutrality of Iran, the Prime Minister assured them that the government would by no means tolerate any foreign troops entering into Iran. Mustaufi ul-Mamālik pointed out that it was to the benefit of both powers as well as

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1. Kitāb-i Sabz bi-tarafī-yi Īrān (Tehran, 1336), 1.



Iran if the Russian troops withdrew at that very time and this would show a friendly attitude towards Iran. Otherwise Iran would face a catastrophe.<sup>1</sup>

The Russian Government almost ignored the Iranian Government's request for the withdrawal of their troops from Azarbaijan. As Miroshnikov wrote, "the problem of their evacuation was not even discussed in Russian diplomatic and military circles."<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, they were instructed to fight against any Turkish troops which passed through Iranian territory. However, the Russian Government's reply to the Iranian Government's appeal was totally disappointing. On 7th October 1914, they informed the Iranian Government that the "Summoning of the Russian troops at the present from Azarbaijan was impossible", the reason being that the Russian troops were only able to maintain security of Russian subjects and other foreigners, and the Iranian Government was not able to make any guarantees.<sup>3</sup> On this matter the British Minister expressed his view that:

There is very little to prove the Russian contention that there would be disorders if the Russian troops were withdrawn, and Persia has not been allowed to take any steps to prepare for preservation of order in the country. 4

It was not surprising when even the Russian Minister, Korostovitz, confessed that:

Strategic necessities and not the maintenance of order, and not the protection of Russian interests, have made it imperative to keep Russian troops in North Persia for the last two years. 5

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1. Ibid., 3.

2. L. I. Miroshnikov, Iran in World War I (Moscow, 1963), 31.

3. Kitāb-i Sabz, op. cit., 5, No. 5.

4. F.O. 800-70. Tehran, Jan. 18, 1915. Townley to Grey.

5. Ibid.

The news from Azarbaijan indicated a serious crisis. The Kurdish tribes had been receiving arms and ammunition from Turkey and Turkish officers were supervising them. On the other hand, the Russian troops were on alert to take action against any opposition; they had also mobilised the Armenians in the region. The collision between the two sides was inevitable, fights broke out, killing, destruction, massacres, homelessness and emigration of the inhabitants started in the region.

Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, however, had to declare Iran's policy. On 12th Zi Hijjah 1332/1st November 1914, the Shah's decree was issued, in which was expressed his regret for the occurrence of the war and indications were made that there was a possibility that the European war would reach Iran's borders. It was pointed out that Iran had friendly relations with belligerent countries, therefore Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, the Prime Minister, was instructed to inform the governors and Iranian authorities that:

Our Government has chosen the policy of neutrality and will maintain its friendly relations with the belligerent countries as before; therefore, the Government authorities must be aware and should by no means to assist or oppose, by land and sea, any one of the belligerent countries ... 1

The Iranian Government also informed foreign legations in Tehran of Iranian policy on the war. On 2nd November 1914, the Russian Legation in Tehran informed the Iranian Government that although war had not yet broken out between Russia and Turkey, in case of its happening, the Russian Government ought to take some military precautions in Azarbaijan. The Russians had indicated that they neither would act against the Iranian Government nor had any intention of annexing

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1. Kitāb-i Sabz, op. cit., 20, No. 37.



Azarbaijan as Russian territory. It was added that a Russian military operation should not be considered as an action against Iran.<sup>1</sup> The Iranian Government interpreted the Russian decision as regrettable and expressed its attitude that the government was against any foreign military operation in Iran. The Iranian Government, through diplomatic connections with some neutral countries, appealed for their support to ask the belligerent countries to respect the neutrality of Iran. The United States was one of them. In replying to the Iranian Government's request, on 11th November 1914, the United States Legation at Tehran informed the Iranian Government that "The Government of the United States will lend its good office to assist in doing whatever it may properly do to alleviate the conditions resulting from the situation existing in Europe."<sup>2</sup> But no effective measures were taken by the United States' Government.

The growth of German's power in Europe, on one hand, brought some rival European powers to compromising attitudes against Germany. On the other hand some others built up friendly relations with the Germans. The German menace was one of the reasons for the British and Russian Governments' concluding the convention of 1907. In respect to Iran, the Germans had been endeavouring for some years to extend their influence towards the Persian Gulf; but the British and Russians had left almost no space for other countries to have any economic or political influence in Iran. They had overall control of Iranian affairs. The Iranian Government had been tightened up by

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1. Ibid., 22, No. 44.

2. Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. 1914, Supplement (Washington, D.C., 1928), 129.



various conventions, ultimatums, demands, being the stipulation of British and Russian loans, and finally military operations.

The Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 from Germany's point of view was the best opportunity for its propaganda to increase their influence in Iran. The Iranian nationalists used to have sympathy with the British against the Russians but since then the British had become allies of the Iranian nationalists' enemy. The increase in Germany's power attracted the Iranian nationalists, as it could be used against the Russians and the British, and the Germans welcomed their inclination. Simultaneously, in neighbouring Turkey, the Germans' influence was considerable and the conclusion of the Potsdam convention between Russia and Germany on 19th August 1911, indicated further German influence over the East through Iran and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, as much as the Russian and British pressure on the Iranian Government increased, the Germans' influence developed.

By the commencement of the war, one of the main concerns of German policy in Asia was India, the vital resource of the British Empire. Particularly from a military point of view, India was an inexhaustible source of man-power for the British in the war. Therefore, the Germans planned to stir up the Indian nationalists and encouraged the Afghans to invade India. Consequently the Germans would be able to paralyse the British military forces in Europe. The only way that it was possible for the Germans to achieve this aim was through the territory of Iran and through the assistance of the Iranian people and Government.

The Germans were perfectly aware of the British and Russian policy in Iran and the attitude of Iranian people towards them. Therefore, the Germans offered what the Iranian people desired. They would help

the Iranians to defend and protect the independence and integrity of their country and to release them from the British and Russian yoke.

On the other hand, the Turks, also in the name of Islam, called for the unification of all Muslims in the world against the British and the Russians. This was combined with the proclamation of a jihād by the fatwā of Muftī A'zam and the 'ulamā' of the Shī'ite sect in Najaf and Karbalā'.

On these bases, the Germans and Turks had started a campaign of propaganda in Iran against the Allies. It was clear that they would be welcomed in Iran. The nationalists, especially the members of the Democrat Party, fully co-operated with the Germans. Taqīzādah, a leader of the Democrats, was invited from the United States to Berlin. He gathered other Iranians, mostly students, from other European countries to go to Germany, such as Īrānshahr, Qazvī, Jamālzādah, Pūrdavīd, and Amīr khizī. They formed an organization to act against the Russians and British in Iran. The members divided into groups and were despatched to contact the nationalist groups in various parts of Iran, for example, Tehran, Shiraz, Qom and Kermanshah. Taqīzādah published the famous newspaper "Kāvah" in Berlin and Pūrdavīd also published the newspaper "Rastakhīz" in Kermanshah.

As a matter of fact nothing assisted the growth of German and Turkish influence in Iran so much as the Russian and British policy. As Mustaufī ul-Mamālik told the Allied representatives, "recent Russian action in Azarbayijan had done more to irritate public opinion than any propaganda."<sup>1</sup> Townley was told by some of "Russia's most faithful adherents" that:

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1. F.O. 371-2427. No. 287. Tehran, Dec. 23, 1914. Townley to Grey.



Russia appears to ignore the existence of public opinion at the present critical moment, and does nothing to try and win over the good will of Persian people ...

... of course the Turks and the Germans are working day and night to stir up the people against you but the result of their combined efforts is as nothing compared with the feeling that is being roused by Russia's continual high-handed action in Azarbayijan. 1

'Abd Allāh Mustaufī wrote that the people would gather at the shrine of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīm and curse the Russians and British in the prayer.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Māfī described the Iranian people's attitude towards both powers as "The knife had reached into their bones."<sup>3</sup> In other words they could no longer tolerate the Russian and British humiliation.

The outbreak of the war had caused the British and Russian Governments to try to modify their harsh attitude towards Iran; nevertheless, there were not many changes, particularly in their policy. The inclination of Iran towards the Central Powers would damage the British much more than the Russians. Mesopotamia, India and especially the oil fields, which at that time were absolutely vital to the British Navy, would be in serious jeopardy. Though the Russians did not have such an important weakness, they were by no means willing to change their attitude towards Iran, but to some extent became more extreme. The British were so anxious, just before and during the first few months of the war, that they endeavoured to modify the Russian activities. Townley reported, "As Russia's ally we suffer proportionately."<sup>4</sup> The Iranian attitude towards the British

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1. Ibid.

2. 'Abd Allāh Mustaufī, Sharh-i Zandagānī-yi Man (Tehran, 1324), 462.

3. Interview with Mr. Māfī, see Appendix II.

4. F.O. 416-62. Tele. No. 1. Tehran, Jan. 3, 1915. Townley to Grey.



was expressed by a British Minister: "We are rapidly coming to be considered as false friend, who is no more than an accomplice of Russian spoliator in disguise."<sup>1</sup> Sir Percy Sykes had the same opinion: "We suffered much odium through being allies of the detested Russians."<sup>2</sup> The Russians did not care much about respecting international regulations in diplomatic relations, as Townley in a letter to Sir Edward Grey wrote about the attitude of the Russian Minister, Korostovitz, at Tehran: "Not much to be wondered at, seeing that he is studiously rude to them as to everybody also both on official and social occasions."<sup>3</sup>

In the northern provinces of Iran, Russia took some measures which indicated the complete violation of neutrality. In Mashhad a German businessman was attacked by some Russian troops. They cut off one of his hands and wounded him several times. He died two days later. In Urumiyah and Tabriz the Turkish, Austrian and German Consulates were occupied by Russian forces. The staff of the consulates and subjects of the Central Powers were arrested and later on were despatched to Russia. In spite of the fact that the Germans had obtained the United States' protection for German companies in Tabriz, the Russians confiscated their properties. They practically ignored the Iranian regional authorities' rights. The British Minister expressed his opinion on the Russian activities in Iran as: "No-one cares a jot

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1. F.O. 416-62. Tele. No. 5. Tehran, Jan. 3, 1915. Townley to Grey.

2. Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia (3rd ed., London, 1930), II, 435.

3. F.O. 800-70. Tehran, Jan. 3, 1915. Townley to Grey. Concerning the attitude of Russian diplomats towards Iranian authorities, Taqizādah mentioned two occasions when they did not respect diplomatic regulations and sometimes were insulting (Khatābahā-yi Taqizādah [Tehran, 1338 H.S.], 30.) Rīzā Dīvānbaygī also had complained about this matter (Safar-i Muhājirat dar Nukhustīn Jang-i Jihānī [Tehran, 1351 H.S.], 4).

what happens to this miserable country so long as it remains in a subservient condition and can be trampled under foot as each consul sees fit."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, on December 5th, 1914, during the inauguration of the third Majlis, the Shah announced once more the neutrality of Iran in the war and asked the Majlis to support his government's programmes. Of 127 members of the Majlis, 93 took their seats. Three parties had representatives in the Majlis: Democrat, Moderate and 'Ilmiyyah; there was also a neutral group. In spite of all the pressure on the Democrats and the strong propaganda against them by both powers they were able to win about 30 seats in the Majlis; it was considered a victory for anti-Allied groups. The Majlis approved the government policy and the cabinet, with more effort, persuaded the belligerent countries to leave Iran alone with her problems. The government repeatedly asked for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iran. From the Allied Ministers' point of view, under these circumstances, the Iranian request seemed wise. The British Minister reported: "I would venture to put on record my firm conviction that withdrawal of Russian troops is only measure that can now save the situation."<sup>2</sup> The Russian Minister also agreed with the idea, but the Russian Government apparently never considered the Iranian request seriously. On the other hand, the Turks announced that they had come to assist the Iranian people against the Russians. The Turkish Ambassador at Tehran, in replying to the constant protests of the Iranian Government, complained that the government had just kept the Turks under pressure

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1. F.O. 800-70. Tehran, Jan. 18, 1915. Townley to Grey.

2. F.O. 416-62. Tele. No. 5. Tehran, Jan. 3, 1915. Townely to Grey.



while the Russians freely acted in Iran, even against foreign diplomats.

However, he indicated that

He could only submit request of Persian Government for withdrawal of Turkish troops to the Porte when Russian Minister had officially announced that Russian troops would be withdrawn from all Persia ... that Turks had only come to Persia in order to rid the country of hated Russians. 1

The Iranian Government constantly received protests from belligerent countries against which the government had no alternative but to do the same and keep them responsible for violating the neutrality of Iran. The United States Legation at Tehran strongly protested against the Russians, who had taken over a German company at Tabriz, which was under the protection of the United States, but the Iranian Government was unable to take any measures. The situation went from bad to worse.

In the south of Iran, the British had also taken some measures which in some ways overshadowed the Iranian Government's problems. The British Navy in the Persian Gulf disembarked troops at Bushire, which caused the Turkish Government to protest to the Iranian Government. Later on they arrested the German Consul at Bushire and a representation of the German company of Wonkhaus.

On 10th March 1914, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik resigned and Mushir ud-Daulah was instructed to form his cabinet. Three days later he introduced his cabinet to the Shah. The Majlis also approved his programme. Concerning internal problems, he asked the Majlis to dissolve the law of 23rd Jauza 1332, in which the Belgians, who had full power over Iranian finance, thereafter would act under the

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1. Ibid.



Minister for Finance. This was considered a curb on the Russian and British influence in Iran. From the foreign point of view, Mushīr ud-Daulah expressed his opinion to the Allied Ministers at Tehran, that there were three alternatives along which Iran might proceed: first, join the Allies, which, considering public opinion, was impossible; second, join the Central Powers, but the government was strongly against this; third, maintain neutrality, which Mushīr ud-Daulah asked to be seriously considered. He soon understood that the Allies did not have any intention of withdrawing Russian troops from Iran and were thinking of bringing Iran onto their side. Meanwhile, the Allied Ministers were replaced in Tehran. Townley, who had some sympathy with Iran, was replaced by Marling, and M. Etter came instead of Korostovitz. These changes indicated a tougher policy by both powers in Iran. On 22nd April 1915, Mushīr ud-Daulah resigned. The Allies nominated Sa'd ud-Daulah and put the Shah under pressure to appoint him as Prime Minister, but the Majlis rose against him and he was not able to form his cabinet. Therefore, 'Ayn ud-Daulah became Prime Minister.

#### Revision of Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907

For many years the British had been acquainted with the Russian attitude towards Iran. Sir George Buchanan, the British Minister at Petrograd, in an audience with the Russian Emperor, Nicholas II, discussed the British and Russian relations with Iran. Buchanan wrote about the Emperor's opinion on the subject, "He personally thought that our relationship would be far more friendly and satisfactory were

there no Persia between us."<sup>1</sup> From the Emperor's point of view the reason for not doing so was that "the British public opinion was hardly yet prepared to see England and Russia neighbours."<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, although the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 brought both governments to friendly relations and "Framed with the immediate aim of preventing Persia becoming an apple of discord between them"<sup>3</sup>, they had never settled the dispute between the two powers. Grey wrote to Buchanan that the British and Russians "were friends over whom still hung the shadow of past differences and misunderstandings."<sup>4</sup> However, Iran remained the most sensitive part of both governments' problems in the Middle East. Therefore, they had always intended to settle the problems. Sazonoff, in a meeting with Grey, indicated that the Russians would like to have freedom of activity in the north of Iran and that they were willing to allow the British to have the same in the south. He also pointed out that "the time had come for what would virtually have amounted to the partition of the neutral Zone and that the clause relating to it should be modified by an exchange of secret notes."<sup>5</sup>

The First World War overshadowed everything in the world and from both powers' point of view it was the best opportunity to end their differences over Iran. As to the convention of 1907, both governments had in fact practically ignored their undertakings concerning the independence and integrity of Iran. The Russian attitude towards Iran and their activities in this country had been well

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1. Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia (London, 1923), I, 169.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., I, 91.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., I, 114.



described by Sir George Buchanan, who had been instructed to ask Russia for a modification of their policy in Iran. At the end of June 1914, in an audience with the Emperor, in frank and rather strong language, he complained that Russia acted as though "North Persia was now to all intents and purposes a Russian province."<sup>1</sup> He continued:

We did not ... for a moment doubt His Majesty's assurance that he would not annex any portion of Persian territory. We were but recording actual facts. Unforeseen events had led to the occupation of certain districts in North Persia by Russian troops, and, little by little, the whole machinery of the administration had been placed in the hands of the Russian consuls. The Governor-General of Azerbaijan was a mere puppet who received and carried out the orders of the Russian consul-general, and the same might be said of the Governors at Resht, Kazvin and Julfa. They were one and all agents of the Russian Government and acted in entire independence of the central government at Tehran. Vast tracts of land in North Persia were being acquired by illegal methods, large numbers of Persians were being converted into Russian-protected subjects, and the taxes were being collected by the Russian consuls to the exclusion of the agents of the Persian financial administration. The above system was being extended to Ispahan and even to the neutral Zone ... 2

With regard to the British policy in Iran, the Government of India expressed its point of view:

Most of the difficulties that have since arisen have been due to the fact that His Majesty's Government having abdicated in theory, found themselves quite unable in practice ... 3

It was continued that since the conclusion of the agreement of 1907, "we have been endeavouring to evade the consequences by constantly

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1. Ibid., I, 115.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 371-2426. C. 142. Oct. 8, 1915. Memorandum by Political Department, India Office.



interfering with Russia in her sphere and by treating the neutral sphere as though it were our own."<sup>1</sup>

Although the Potsdam Convention had undesirable effects on Anglo-Russian relations, nevertheless the British Government by no means desired to see the Russians and Germans on friendly terms; therefore, they were quite prepared to offer the Russians considerable privileges in order to restrain their inclination towards Germany. At the beginning of the war, the British realised that it was necessary to take action on the matter. Buchanan had commented on this point: "His Majesty's Government had however to take into account ... and to give some satisfaction to the wishes and aspirations of the Russian people."<sup>2</sup>

Secret diplomatic negotiations in London and Petrograd were in progress; in a meeting in London, the Russian Ambassador and, simultaneously in Petrograd, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, were informed that "in the event of our defeating Germany the fate of Constantinople and Straits would be decided in conformity with Russia's needs."<sup>3</sup> This had been the dream of Russian Emperors for many years, and it might come true. On 13th November 1914, the British Government's proposal was confirmed when, in an audience of King George V, at Buckingham Palace, the King suddenly changed the subject and addressed the Russian Minister, saying, "As far as Constantinople is concerned it is clear that this city must be yours."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Buchanan, op. cit., I, 224.

3. Ibid., I, 225.

4. C. Jay Smith, Jr., The Russian Struggle for Power, 1914-1917 (New York, 1956), 86.

Petrograd welcomed the British proposal and opened direct negotiations on the matter. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a meeting with the British Minister at Petrograd, showed signs of willingness that the Russians were prepared to offer some advantages in return and mentioned that they did not wish to extend their present possessions in Iran although they were quite willing to agree to an extension of the British sphere.<sup>1</sup> On 13th March 1915, Buchanan was instructed to inform the Emperor personally that

His Majesty's Government were prepared to give this assurance on certain condition ... the revision of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 and recognition of the neutral zone as a British sphere would have to be conceded by Russia ... The nature of that arrangement in general terms would make a great step in advance towards a final and friendly settlement of Persian question. 2

Buchanan received the Emperor's consent in principle. Sazavof remarked that "Russia must in return be allowed complete liberty of action in her own sphere."<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, Buchanan confessed that the maintenance of Iranian integrity

was more likely to be attended were ambitious Russian consuls to be precluded as they would be under the new arrangement, from pursuing a forward policy contrary to the wishes of their Government. 4

On 20th March 1915, the British and Russian governments concluded an agreement concerning Constantinople, the Straits and Iran, which was recognised by France and later Italy. In summary the treaty was:

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1. F.O. 416-62. Tele. No. 91. Petrograd, Jan. 26, 1915.
  2. Buchanan, op. cit., I, 226.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid., I, 227.



Britain consents - to the annexation by Russia the straits and Constantinople, in return for a similar benevolent attitude on Russia's part towards the political aspiration of Britain in other parts. The neutral zone in Persia to be included in British sphere of influence. The districts adjoining Ispahan and Yezd to be included in Russian sphere, in which Russia is to be granted "full liberty of action." 1

The treaty contained some other conditions which could be understood from Sazonoff's letter to the Russian Minister at London, dated March 20, 1915:

Referring to the Memorandum of British Government (? Embassy) here on March 12, will you please express to Grey the profound gratitude of the Imperial Government for the complete and final assent of Great Britain to the solution of the question of the Straits and Constantinople, in accordance with Russia's desires. The Imperial Government fully appreciated the sentiments of the British Government and feels certain that a sincere recognition of mutual interests will secure for ever the firm friendship between Russia and Great Britain.

Having already given its promise respecting the conditions of trade in the Straits and Constantinople, the Imperial Government sees no objections to confirming its assent to the establishment (1) of free transit through Constantinople for all goods not proceeding from or proceeding to Russia, and (2) free passage through the Straits for merchant vessels.

. . . . .

The Imperial Government completely shares the view of the British Government that the holy Moslem places must also in future remain under an independent Moslem rule. It is desirable to elucidate at once whether it is contemplated to leave those places under the rule of Turkey, the Sultan retaining the title of Caliph, or to create new independent States, since the Imperial Government would only be able to formulate its desires in accordance with one or other of these assumptions. On its part the Imperial Government would regard the separation of the Caliphate from Turkey as very desirable. Of course the freedom of pilgrimage must be completely secured.

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1. F. Seymour Cocks, The Secret Treaties (2nd ed., London, 1918), 15.



The Imperial Government confirms its assent to the inclusion of the neutral zone of Persia in the British sphere of influence. At the same time, however, it regards it as just to stipulate that the districts adjoining the cities of Ispahan and Yezd forming with them one inseparable whole, should be secured for Russia in view of the Russian interests which have arisen there. The neutral zone now forms a wedge between the Russian and Afghan frontiers, and comes up to the very frontier line of Russia at Zulfagar. Hence a portion of this wedge will have to be annexed to Russian sphere of influence. Of essential importance to the Imperial Government is the question of railway construction in the neutral zone, which will require further amicable discussion.

The Imperial Government expects that in future its full liberty of action will be recognised in the sphere of influence allotted to it, coupled in particular with the right of preferentially developing in that sphere its financial and economic policies.

. . . . .

Signed

Sazonoff. 1

The words "full liberty of action" were described from the British authorities' point of view as "it means eventual complete Russification of Northern Persia, and eventual establishment of Russian province ..."<sup>2</sup>

It was an incredible event in Russian history. Although the Russians had always endeavoured to achieve this purpose, due to being opposed by the British and French, it was considered too ambitious. The Russians had kept their allies under pressure for this purpose; once Sazanoff complained that

The Emperor .. felt that after all the sacrifices which he had imposed on his people he could no longer delay asking his allies for a definite assurance of their consent to incorporation of Constantinople in the Russian Empire when once the war had been won. 3

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 371-2426. No. 5. From Viceroy, June 12, 1915.

3. Buchanan, op. cit., I, 225.

Now here they were. They had received what they had dreamed of for many years. The Russian ministers and diplomats were not able to conceal their astonishment when they received the British assent to their aims. In spite of the strict secrecy and confidentiality of the treaty which was supposed to be enacted after the war, nevertheless, on 2nd December, 1916, somehow the Russian Prime Minister, M. Trpoff, revealed the agreement in the session of the Duma and stated:

An agreement which we concluded with Great Britain and France, and to which Italy has adhered established in the most definite fashion the right of Russia to the Straits and Constantinople .. I repeat that absolute agreement as this point is friendly established among the Allies. 1

This indicated a radical change in the British and French policy concerning the Middle East, over which they had fought during the Crimean War. The British public was kept ignorant and even in the House of Commons, on 30th May 1915, the British Foreign Minister refused to make any comment on the question which related to the aspirations of the Russians to Constantinople.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Iran, the fate and future of the country and its people was evident, as far as the Allies were concerned. Some British diplomats who had connections with Iranian affairs showed some sympathy with Iran; as the Viceroy of the Persian Gulf wrote:

We wish it clearly understood that we put forward partition as an unwelcome necessity in the event of Persia forsaking her neutrality ... partition and spheres of influence are two entirely different propositions, and we sincerely trust that former may be avoided. 3

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1. Cocks, op. cit., 17.

2. Ibid., 16.

3. F.O. 371-2426. Appendix A. No. 3. From Viceroy, April 19, 1915.



But it was too late; when they were informed of the actual treaty, they expressed their opinion: "we cannot help thinking that the proposed great concessions to Russia in Constantinople and Straits are by no means balanced by an advantage to us which we can discern in these proposals."<sup>1</sup> However, they asked for similar freedom of action in the British sphere. The Government of India's explanation clarified the matters to the British diplomats:

... the consequences of giving Russia a free hand in her own sphere. It will become virtually a Russian province, and the capital will always be under Russian control. But those conditions really exist already, and I venture to think that it is better to face the facts, and make our own arrangements in our own sphere, than to attempt to impose restrictions which Russia, even if she keeps them in the letter, will (as we shall think) break in the spirit. Surely we know enough now to realize that it is idle to talk of "making revival of Persia possible." The happiness and prosperity of the people of that unfortunate country depend, so far as can be foreseen, upon administration which only outside control - whether directly or indirectly exercise - can secure. A scheme for such control ought to be part of our settlement not only in the interest of the people, but as a means of obviating friction between ourselves and Russia. 2

From the British point of view, besides the neutral zone in Iran, they gained "the maintenance of British absolute supremacy in the Persian Gulf"<sup>3</sup>, Anglo-Persian oil-fields and of course the safety of India. It would not perhaps be an exaggeration to say that the Anglo-Persian oil-fields were as important to the British as Constantinople and the Straits were to Russia.

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 371-2426. C. 142. Memorandum by Political Department, India Office, Oct. 8, 1915.

3. Ibid.



## CHAPTER I

### THE NEUTRALITY OF IRAN

#### Mustaufi ul-Mamalik's Cabinet

In the summer of 1915, Iran was faced with one of its most critical periods in the First World War. In fact, the country had actually been without a government for fifty-four days. At last, on Tuesday, 17th August 1915, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik was able to organise his cabinet and presented them to the Shah; the following day they were introduced to the Majlis as follows<sup>1</sup>: Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior; Muhammad Vali Khan Sipahdar 'Azam, Minister of War; Prince Muhammad 'Ali Khan 'Ala' us-Saltanah, Minister of Justice; Mirza Hasan Khan Vus'uq ud-Daulah, Minister of Finance; Mirza Hasan Khan Muhtashim us-Saltanah, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Muhammad Sadiq Khan Mustashar ud-Daulah, Minister of Post and Telegraphs; Mirza Ibrahim Khan Hakim ul-Mulk, Minister of Education and Pious Foundations; Prince Asadullah Mirza Shihab ud-Daulah, Minister of Commerce and Utilities.

As a matter of fact, this government seemed to be the only viable group which could take control. The cabinet contained members of all the opposition parties; for example, Vus'uq ud-Daulah and Sipahdar were considered Russophiles and 'Ala' us-Saltanah and Shihab ud-Daulah were known as pro-British.<sup>2</sup> Some members of the cabinet belonged to the

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1. Sipihr, 197.

2. F.O. 416-63. No. 111. Tehran, Sept. 1, 1915. Marling to Grey.

political parties: Ḥakīm ul-Mulk and Mustashār ud-Daulah represented the Democrats and Muhtashim us-Saltānah was a member of I'tidāl (the Moderates). The organisation of such a cabinet was not easily arranged; although Mustaufī ul-Mamālik was aware of the general support and sympathy of the Majlis, press and people for him, he had to confront tremendously complicated difficulties: first of all, the continuation of the country's critical affairs; second, the Majlis deputies who were very concerned about the membership of the cabinet; third, his need to frame the unlimited foreign interferences in the country's economic and political matters and administration; and the most important point, to receive their agreement to withdraw their forces from Iranian territory. He was well-informed that the Russians and British were by no means satisfied with his leadership; as the pro-Democratic newspaper "Naubahār" wrote:

On one hand, they and their supporters have arranged some meetings inside and outside the city and concluded that the last alternative to set back Mustaufī ul-Mamālik is the arrival of the Russian forces; and immediately they have prepared the means for their entrance ... On the other hand, they have met the persons who might join the cabinet and threatened them in order to prevent accepting Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's proposals. 1

The country's, and particularly Tehran's, atmosphere had become a subject of anxiety and reached a highly convulsive condition. "Shūrā", a Tehran newspaper, wrote:

We do not imagine that there is anyone who can conceal the intensity of the deplorable condition in which the country has recently been involved ... every hour annihilation and disappearance threaten our lives, political freedom and national independence ... today, there is no peril to the Constitution or to freedom

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1. "Naubahār", No. 64, Aug. 10, 1915/Ramāzān 28, 1333.



which you can imagine; the liberals united is a necessity  
... The country with all integrity is in danger ... 1

The newspaper asked for an alliance between the Majlis and people to support the government. Mr. Marling was not certain that Mustaufi ul-Mamālik would be able to form a cabinet; he reported that:

Mustufi-ul-Mamalik is trying to form a cabinet, but even if he should succeed filling various offices the combination would be too weak and too much under democrat influence to be of any use ... 2

The tension of the political parties reached its apex in the Majlis. There were many discussions and arguments among the parties about the election of ministers, either in common meetings or in private ones. However, the disturbance of the country's affairs, the lack of a responsible government and fear of the possibility that both powers might take action and despatch the Russian force at Qazvin to occupy the capital — as they maneuvered with such intention on 5th August 1915 — and to attempt a coup d'etat; therefore, on Sunday, 8th August 1915, after a meeting in the Majlis, the deputies of all the parties concluded an agreement in which they agreed to leave Mustaufi ul-Mamālik alone with his decision and not to interfere in the formation of his cabinet. All Mustaufi ul-Mamālik's efforts gathered to form a cabinet to ease Russian and British embarrassment, in order to prevent any scheme of occupation of Tehran and, meanwhile, assured the Germans and especially the Turks that if Iran had no intention of joining them, at least it was determined to maintain its neutrality. He also wanted to obtain the deputies' votes of confidence

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1. "Shūrā", No. 82, Aug. 13, 1915/Shavvāl 1, 1333.

2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 270. Tehran, Aug. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.



and, most importantly, to appease public agitation and to end disorder in the country. Some of the ministers' desire increased the problems of forming the cabinet. Sipahdār wished to be installed as Minister of the Interior, but Mustaufī ul-Mamālik preferred to have this position himself in order to prevent the protest of any opposition; therefore, Sipahdār was appointed as War Minister. He accepted the position reluctantly but resigned after being introduced to the Shah, having accepted the position only at the insistence of Mustaufī ul-Mamālik and under condition that all Iranian forces should be under the War Minister's command.<sup>1</sup> Vusūq ud-Daulah declared that he had accepted his post for the same reason; furthermore, he felt that his refusal would have been considered in public opinion as an acknowledgement of Russian sympathies.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the fact that Mustaufī ul-Mamālik was backed by general support, the announcement of the cabinet members in the Majlis, parties and press raised various reactions and he was vehemently criticised by some of the newspapers and opposition groups because of some of his cabinet's ministers, particularly those who were well-known as pro-Russian. A Tehran newspaper, "Parvardīn", inveighed against Vusūq ud-Daulah and wrote: "... [the name of] Vusūq ud-Daulah is a proverb for treachery to the country and malevolence for Iran ..."<sup>3</sup> It then mentioned some of his faults in the past and concluded that "This is the fault of those who call themselves liberals and support Vusūq ud-Daulah ... Fie upon our liberality."<sup>4</sup>

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1. According to Sipahr, 198, Sipahdār had been told by the interpreter of the Russian Embassy to refuse membership in the cabinet.
  2. Sipahr, 197.
  3. "Parvardīn", No. 57, Aug. 20, 1915/Shavvāl 8, 1333.
  4. Ibid.

"Ra'd", a Tehran newspaper, quoted the view of the French newspaper "Echo du Paris" on 2nd September 1915, about the cabinet, that it "had been heard that the new cabinet is a pro-German one", and about Vusūq ud-Daulah it wrote: "The Finance Minister is one of the distinguished and well-known Russian adherents ..."<sup>1</sup>

"Shihāb-i Sāqib", another Tehran newspaper, wrote:

... Whatever has been said about the members of the cabinet, the honesty and patriotism of the Prime Minister is not in doubt ... However we hold a good opinion of this cabinet ... 2

"'Aṣr-i Jadīd", in an article, received the cabinet with an embrace and compliment and had a comment on the ministers: "... without any exaggeration one can say that Mr. Mustaufī ul-Mamālik is the most popular politician in Iran ..." and continued its opinion about the members of the cabinet, thanking Sipahdār for accepting the War Ministry, and stated that it would have declared its regret if Vusūq ud-Daulah had not accepted membership in the cabinet, adding that "We cannot forget some of his endeavours and activities in the past ..." The newspaper wrote about the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Muhtashim us-Salṭānah: "We do not think there is any diplomat more suitable for Foreign Affairs than His Highness ... Indeed one can say he is the Talleyrand of Iran."<sup>3</sup>

In fact Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's cabinet was undesirable to both powers, but all British and Russian efforts had failed to set up a favourable one. For instance, Sa'd ud-Daulah had the support of both powers and the Shah was under pressure from the British and Russian

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1. "Ra'd", No. 8, Oct. 23, 1915/Ẓi Hījjaḥ 13, 1333.
  2. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 78, Aug. 19, 1915/Shavvāl 7, 1333.
  3. "'Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 56, Aug. 21, 1915/Shavvāl 9, 1333.



Ministers at Tehran for Sa'd ud-Daulah's appointment as Prime Minister, to form a cabinet. On the other hand, none of the Iranian politicians liked or dared to accept the membership of his cabinet. That was considered as a great victory for the Majlis, parties and nationalists and a failure for British and Russian influence in Iran. The following cabinet was composed under 'Ayn ud-Daulah's leadership, and the Democrats' interpellation of Farmān Farmā caused the resignation of the cabinet and this indicated the development of the Democrat power. A Russian newspaper, "Novoye Vremya", wrote: "The Democrats have dismissed Farmān Farmā and [although] our friends have done whatever [they could], [they] were not successful in bringing him back."<sup>1</sup> "Ruski Slovo", another Russian newspaper, attacked the Democrats and offered a suggestion:

Our supporters and also the Moderates of the Majlis have been out of patience because of the Democrats' stubbornness, expecting that Russia and Britain will exercise their power to relieve the present situation. 2

There was a strong probability that a pro-German government might be able to form a cabinet which would be undesirable to the Allies. Mr. Marling hastily requested reinforcements for the Russian troops at Qazvin and explain that "Arrival of troops is only measure which will put an end to present Cabinet crisis and give us a Government on which we can use pressure for protection of our consuls and colonies."<sup>3</sup> The gravity of Iran's situation had attracted considerable attention from the British. Sir Edward Grey asked Sir George Buchanan to negotiate

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1. "Novoye Vremya", quoted in "Naubahār", No. 64, Aug. 10, 1915/Ramāzān 28, 1333.
  2. "Ruski Slovo", quoted in "Naubahār", No. 64, Aug. 10, 1915/Ramāzān 28, 1333.
  3. F.O. 416-63. No. 258. Tehran, July 23, 1915. Marling to Grey.



with the Russian Foreign Minister to explain the importance of the conditions in Iran and the necessity of despatching Russian troops to Iran. He anxiously wrote: "I earnestly hope that Minister for Foreign Affairs will be able to give satisfactory answer to my telegram."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Marling, in his next report, again emphatically asked for immediate despatch of Russian troops and if possible in greater number and he frankly pointed out that "if they do not appear, influence of the two Powers in Persia will be most seriously shaken."<sup>2</sup>

The Russians' reaction appeared in the speech of Mr. Sazanov, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the August 1st inauguration of the Duma, about Russian foreign policy; he referred to Iran and explained the situation in the country, which his government had been considering very carefully, confessed his anxiety about the Russian interest in Iran and added that if the crisis continued the Russian Government would have to take serious measures.<sup>3</sup> This was a warning to Iran and was followed by a letter from the Russian Legation at Tehran on 4th August to the Iranian Foreign Office, which stated that because the Iranian Government had not been able to pay the instalments of its debt to the Russian Government, therefore, according to the convention, they had the right to take control of Iranian Customs.<sup>4</sup> The British and Russian Ministers in Tehran realised that they should act immediately and believed that "only a demonstration of military force can restore our influence"<sup>5</sup> in Iran, especially in the capital.

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 1563. F.O., July 24, 1915. Grey to Buchanan.

2. F.O. 416-63. No. 261. Tehran, July 26, 1915. Marling to Grey.

3. "Shūrā", Aug. 15, 1915/Shavvāl 3, 1333; Sipih, 193.

4. Sipih, 193; "Irshād", No. 98, Aug. 5, 1915/23 Ramazān 1333.

5. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 276. Tehran, Aug. 10, 1915; "Naubahār", No. 65, Aug. 13, 1915/Shavvāl 1, 1333.

Mr. Marling in his report expressed his anxiety: "Whatever they may be, it seems to me imperative that we should get an end put to intolerable position ... and this can only be achieved by appearance of Russian troops ..."<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, on the evening of 4th August about one thousand men of the Russian force at Qavin left the city for Tehran and on the following day their advance guard was at Qishlaq, a village between Qazvin and Karaj. The news of the Russian advance produced great panic in the capital. The people assembled at the Majlis and ministries, protesting against the Russian action and asking what they should do; some politicians, deputies, and people were preparing to leave the city. There was an opinion that the capital should be transferred to Isfahan. The legations of countries hostile to the Allies were hastily made ready to evacuate the capital. The German Minister in Tehran asked the American Embassy for protection and Mr. Caldwell, the American Ambassador in Tehran, accepted to undertake protection of the German Embassy, subjects and interests in Tehran. Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, who had been involved in the problems of the formation of his cabinet, ordered the Iranian Foreign Office to ask the Russian Legation for an explanation of the action of the Russian troops and also communicated Iranian anxiety to the British Legation at Tehran. The Allies had no intention of occupying the capital. They were well-informed that it might cause the transference of the capital and consequently let the Shah and Iranian Government be pushed under anti-Allied influence completely. Therefore, on the evening of the same day (5th August) the force withdrew to Qazvin and the Russian Minister, in reply to the Iranian Foreign Office, answered that the

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 268. Tehran, Aug. 3, 1915. Marling to Grey.



force had just been on a maneuver. However, it seemed that a "demonstration of military force"<sup>1</sup> had affected Mustaufi ul-Mamalik's decision on the formation of his cabinet.

On the other hand, the British and Russian Ministers at Tehran understood that it would be better to assist the Iranian Government in order to prevent them from any further inclination towards the anti-Allied countries. The British Government was agreeable to the suggestion, as Grey wrote to Buchanan, to draw the Russian Government's attention to the point that "if no assistance is forthcoming from the two legations the Persian cabinet will turn with some justification to the German quarters, which would be most undesirable at present juncture."<sup>2</sup> However, the Russian Government refused any financial assistance and replied that it "would be inopportune at the present moment."<sup>3</sup> The harshness of Russian policy in Iran, as exemplified in Mr. Sazanov's speech, produced a furious reaction in the political societies of Iran.

"Shūrā", a Tehran newspaper, criticised Russian policy in Iran and attacked Mr. Sazanov, whom it held responsible for the disturbances in Iran: "... all the disturbances and disorders in the recent years are the result of the Russian diplomats and representatives, conspiracies and intrigues ..."<sup>4</sup> It referred to the revolt of Šamad Khān (Shujā' ud-Daulah) and others under Russian protection, and bloodshed, destruction and disorder in Azarbaijan, the north and north-east of Iran, and named all the incidents which the Russians had taken part

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 276. Tehran, Aug. 10, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1676. F.O., Aug. 3, 1915. Grey to Buchanan.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1135. Petrograd, Aug. 10, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.
  4. "Shūrā", No. 83, Aug. 15, 1915/Shavvāl 15, 1333.

in directly. The newspaper concluded that "We do not imagine what could be more serious than it is now ..."<sup>1</sup>

"Naubahār" also had the same opinion about Russian policy and received Mr. Sazanov's speech with astonishment; it stated that the Turks and Germans had been disappointed in Iranian policy, so that the former entered the country in force and the latter contacted the tribes directly and in answering the Iranian question, it would say that the Iranian Government were in favour of the Russians and British. On the other hand, the British and Russians were of the same opinion and had performed graver actions in Iran than countries hostile to them. The writer then referred to a part of Mr. Sazanov's speech in which he stated that he believed the reason for the prolongation of Iran's crisis was due to disagreement between the government and the Democratic Party.<sup>2</sup> In the conclusion of the article, the newspaper stated that in fact both powers were preventing the formation of a cabinet and the maintenance of order and security in Iran. In the next issue, it was stated: "Iran in the battle of political life should either die or live ..."<sup>3</sup>

A commentator in "The Near East" on Iranian affairs and their reaction to Russian policy in Iran during the last few decades wrote: "This sentiment is not difficult to explain. Many Persians will tell you that Persia has suffered too much at the hands of Russia not to feel a deep-seated hatred against her."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. "Naubahār", No. 65, Aug. 13, 1915/Shavvāl 1, 1333.

3. Ibid., No. 66, Aug. 16, 1915/Shavvāl 4, 1333.

4. "The Near East", Aug. 13, 1915.



At any rate, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik was able to form a cabinet which, according to Mr. Marling, was "as heterogenous a Ministry as ever sat at the same Council table"<sup>1</sup>; he was also of the opinion that Mustaufi ul-Mamalik's cabinet was "likely to stand long."<sup>2</sup> From the Russian point of view, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik's cabinet would prove that "the anti-Russian tendencies were increasing and that it would not be easy to overcome them"<sup>3</sup>; nevertheless, his cabinet was better than a Democrat one, which would have been unbearable to both powers.<sup>4</sup> However, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, well aware of the critical condition of the country and his responsibility for its future, tried to stop the situation from becoming worse and hoped to improve it. Both the Allies and the Germans tried to induce the Iranian Government to follow a policy favourable to them. The British and Russians expected that the Iranian Government would at least assemble a reliable force composed of the Cossack Brigade and the Bakhtiyari savars in Tehran, and then close the Majlis and suppress the pro-German press.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Turkish Government's intention was to bring about a rupture of relations between Iran and the two powers so as to enable the two Islamic nations to announce a union against the Allies. The Germans were planning to foment general feeling against their opposition to rouse the southern tribes to attack the British forces in Bushire and to encourage the government to follow a policy which would help German propaganda in Afghanistan.

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 111. Tehran, Sept. 1, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. No. 297. Tehran, Aug. 26, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. "The Near East", Aug. 13, 1915.
  4. F.O. 416-63. No. 111. Tehran, Sept. 1, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  5. Ibid.

The Cabinet and Neutrality

Mustaufi ul-Mamalik declared the neutrality of Iran in the war and emphatically announced that the government intended to maintain this policy at all costs. As a commentator in "The Near East" wrote:

The Persian Government so long ago as last November proclaimed its neutrality, and has done everything in its power to maintain a correct attitude. Its task is all the more difficult because it has to struggle against the feelings of the people, who, ignoring facts, and stirred up by the paid agents of Germany, loudly proclaim their hatred of Russia. 1

Although this policy had been violated since the beginning of the war, the declaration of its being followed by Mustaufi ul-Mamalik's cabinet was not surprising, but attracted the attention of foreign countries, the Iranian Majlis, press and people who were curious as to how he intended to implement the violated policy.

"The Hablul Matin", published in India, believed that "Iranian neutrality should be followed by the government and in order to achieve that, it should organize an army to withdraw foreign forces out of the country."<sup>2</sup> "Asr-i Jadid" recommended that "... if the Iranian government wants to keep its neutrality firmly, it should say to everyone that they must evacuate its territory ... and each one who refuses, to declare war against it or to join the opposition."<sup>3</sup>

"Bamdād-i Raushan", another Tehran newspaper, was of the opinion that in principle the declaration of neutrality had not been studied properly from the beginning of the war, and Iran had already missed some chances. The newspaper considered the announcement of the policy

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1. "The Near East", Aug. 13, 1915.

2. "The Hablul Matin", quoted in "Irshād", No. 103, Aug. 29, 1915/Shavvāl 17, 1333.

3. "Asr-i Jadid", No. 59, Aug. 28, 1915/Shavvāl 16, 1333.



as the first success for the British and Russians and stated: "Having a reputation for neutrality was just a way to prevent Iran receiving any advantages ... nevertheless they had already violated Iran's neutrality."<sup>1</sup> The writer was not disappointed; although he believed that the country's condition was worse than the year before, "There is still a chance, on condition that our policy dives out from under the ambiguity and uncertainty ... at least about neutrality we have to follow a way to keep a neutral policy which is our legal and indisputable right."<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, the government attempted to take the opportunity to engage the Russians and British in the war, which seemed the last chance for Iran to survive; from "The Near East"'s point of view, "Under the pretext of profiting by the chance of the European conflagration, to free Persia from the fetters that bind her ..."<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, concerning Iran's condition, Mustaufī ul-Mamālik, the nationalists, and the Majlis would rather have had a fair treaty with the two powers than with the Germans or Turks. Amīr Hishmat, who had finished his military education in Turkey and was one of the Turkish military attaché's companions and was presented to the Shah by him, subsequently became the commander of the national forces in Qom and Kermanshah. He told Kasravī:

I came from Turkey and knew it would be vain to have a tendency toward the Germans and Turks, and war with the Russians. Because ... Germany is far away from us and any help or assistance from them would be achieved by the Turks ... and I was well aware that we would not be able to coordinate with them ... On the other hand, considering the Iranian situation, it would be very difficult for the Iranian Government to

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1. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 82, Aug. 30, 1915/Shavvāl 18, 1333.
  2. Ibid.
  3. "The Near East", Aug. 13, 1915.

be engaged in a war with the Russians. Therefore it would be better for the Iranian Government to take the opportunity of the involvement of the two great powers in the war to conclude a fair agreement with them and to follow a policy which could prevent the German and Turkish agents' activities in Iran. This was my idea and that of my friends. 1

A commentator for "The Near East" had the same opinion: "The Persian situation convinces me that not only the Government but the whole nation are determined to maintain their neutrality with all means at their disposal."<sup>2</sup>

But not only had the British and Russians no intention of coming to terms with the Iranian Government in order to formulate a treaty, they had already concluded a new and secret convention to complete the 1907 Anglo-Russian convention, which has been mentioned earlier. However, the activities of the opposition and the antipathy of the Iranian people against Russia increased day by day, and this attitude also included the British, mostly because of their cooperation with Russia, but also due to their violation of Iranian neutrality by their occupation of the southern part of Iran, particularly Bushire.

#### Bushire under British Occupation

On Sunday, 8th August 1915, British troops landed on Iranian soil with no declaration of war against Iran or any notification to the Iranian Government; they occupied Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf and other southern ports as well as Bushire, the most important Iranian port on the Persian Gulf. It was the centre of transportation for Iranian imports and exports to India, European countries (especially

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1. Kasravi, 637.

2. "The Near East", Aug. 20, 1915.



Britain) and other continents. By 5 a.m. on that day the city was under the control of the British forces. The slight resistance by the gendarmerie had been ended by the governor's instruction; he was considered extremely pro-British and had been told by the British representative at Bushire to do so; he ordered the gendarmerie commander-in-chief to be disarmed, then surrounded their station, impounded their ammunition and ordered them to leave the city. So they obeyed and left the city on the road to Shiraz. The governor's residence, the Customs office, the Post and Telegraph building and the anti-Allied consulates were seized; the anti-British elements in the city were arrested and the Customs' gunboat "Muzaffar" and two armed launches, "Āzarbayjān" and "Māzandarān", were seized. Lowering the Iranian flag, hoisting the British one and printing "Bushire under British occupation"<sup>1</sup> on stamps were among the first British actions. According to the Reuter Agency's report in "The Times", the occupation of Bushire was the consequence of the killing of two British officers on 12th July 1915, and the Iranian Government's failure to punish the tribal chiefs who were responsible for the incident.<sup>2</sup>

For a more complete account of this event, we should go back a few months. The Indian Viceroy in the Persian Gulf at Bushire had been anxious about the increase in activities by German agents in the southern provinces of Iran; therefore, he ordered the arrest of the German Consul and businessmen at Bushire and other southern Iranian ports and despatched them to India. There was no effective or immediate action, not even a protest, from the Iranian authorities;

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 31, No. 117. 1333 H.Q. or 1293 H.S. Shavvāl 18, 1333; Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 270.
  2. "The Times", Sept. 10, 1915.

but the people, especially in the southern provinces and the tribes, protested strongly against the British. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, the Governor of Shiraz at the time, wrote: "... not only had they broken the neutrality but trampled on it."<sup>1</sup> He believed that the German Consul and Wassmuss were able to do nothing, but the British action provoked the people and "fastened my hands".<sup>2</sup> However, the German agents, and particularly Wassmuss, found this the best opportunity to increase their activities and propaganda to encourage and induce any persons who had power or influence over the people to inflame anti-British feeling among the people; they also co-operated with all anti-Allied political societies in the south, by distributing a great number of pamphlets and broadsheets. Some contained the 'ulamā''s proclamation for holy war (jihād) against the British and Russians<sup>3</sup>, others referred to Russian bad policy and maltreatment in Iran, such as the Russian occupation of northern Iran, the hanging of some of the 'ulamā' at Tabriz, the bombardment of the shrine of Imām Riḏā and also the British exploitation of India and the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907. In addition, the Germans were spending a great deal of money for a campaign against the British in the south.

The German Minister in Tehran, Prince Reuss, in an interview with the editor of "'Asr-i Jadīd", said:

The British have arrested our consul at Bushire and accused him of rising against the Allies. I will ask how the British allowed themselves to do such an action in a neutral country ... why they do not prevent their consuls who openly stir up trouble against Germany, Austria and Turkey throughout the country ... 4

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1. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 270.

2. Ibid.

3. Sipīhr, 72-73.

4. "'Asr-i Jadīd", quoted in Aḥmad Aḥrar, Tūfān dar Īrān (Tehran, 1352 H.S.), I, 203.





Then the Prince referred to British activities in some tribes against Germany and its allies. Since the beginning of the war, some anjumans had been organised in the southern cities against British policy in Iran. The members of these anjumans came from all classes of Iranian society, including the tribal chiefs, the 'ulamā' and the parties, who shared an anti-British feeling. The union of the anjumans produced a confederation which opened communications with the Indian Viceroy in the Persian Gulf. They spoke of friendship between the two countries, offered some advice and asked for each other's requests. Later they warned and threatened each other; for instance, Shaykh Ḥusayn Muḥammad Tangistānī, one of the 'ulamā', received a letter from the viceroy which explained the friendly relations between Britain and Iran for years, blamed the Germans and Turks for violating Iran's neutrality and added that "Britain is the greatest ruler over Muslims"<sup>1</sup> and had done a lot to help them. He then referred to the German Consul at Bushire, who had attempted to incite the Tangistānī people to invade Bushire; therefore, it had been necessary to prevent them and the Viceroy informed Shaykh Ḥusayn that they had some letters from the German Consul which indicated that the German Minister in Tehran, with assistance from the Swedish officers of the gendarmerie, had planned to raise the south against the British Government, which had no malicious intention, only friendship for Iran.<sup>2</sup> At the end he warned the Shaykh that any anti-British action would have a serious consequence. The Shaykh answered:

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1. I. F.O., C. 66, f. 5, No. 32. 1333 H.Q.

2. Ibid.; Mukhbīr us-Saltānah, 273.

... although as an honest subject of the Iranian Government, I have no right to have direct communication with you ... under the circumstances, I am obliged to reply to your letter ... The Iranian Government has chosen the policy of neutrality ... in spite of the fact that the nation's feeling is obvious; but they have followed the government and done nothing ... The British and Russians have had no respect for our neutrality and the interference of your government and Russia in the Persian Gulf and the north of Iran is good evidence in this matter ... 1

Shaykh Husayn referred to a sentence in the Viceroy's letter ("Britain is the greatest ruler over Muslem countries") and advised him that such words hurt Muslim feelings. He then warned the Viceroy that if they continued their present policy, it would be impossible to appease the people's excitement and to prevent their actions.<sup>2</sup> The consequence of all these communications was the request by the confederation of tribal chiefs for the release of the German Consul, which was rejected by the Viceroy. There was a rumour that the tribes had planned to attack Bushire. On 12th July the British Viceroy at Bushire despatched Major Oliphant and Captain Ranking with a mixed patrol to reconnoitre outside of Bushire. They were ambushed by a group of tribesmen under the command of Ra'is 'Alī, Khān of Dilvar, who apparently acted without instructions from the confederation's commander; as soon as the confederation received the report of Ra'is 'Alī's attack, they ordered him to withdraw<sup>3</sup>, but fighting had already occurred and two British officers and four sepoy were killed and several wounded. "Jām-i Jam", a Shiraz newspaper, after reporting the occurrence of fighting between the tribes and the British force, first praised Ra'is 'Alī and then

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1. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 274.

2. Ibid.,

3. F.O. 371-2436. No. 1588. Bushire, Aug. 31, 1915. Sub-enclosure No. 4. Trevor to F.S. of I.G.; F.O. 416-63. Tele. 244. Tehran, July 14, 1915. Marling to Grey.



referred to casualties: on the British side, two dead and several wounded, and on the other side no casualties at all.<sup>1</sup>

The British Ministers in London, Tehran and India believed that it was time to take strong action against the Iranian Government; there had been some interchanges of view among them about terms which Britain should demand of the Iranian Government. The Indian Government was of the opinion that the terms might be as follows:

- (1) to take definite steps for punishment of khans who were concerned in outrage at Bushire; (2) to pay compensation at the rate of 5,000 l. in the case of each of the British officers killed in the outrage, and 500 l. and 100 l. in the case of each sepoy killed and wounded respectively; (3) to take definite action regarding Germans who are at present in Persia by causing them to be arrested, disarmed, and either interned or handed over to British for deportation; (4) to recall the present Governor-General of Fars. 2

But Mr. Marling felt that these conditions were not harsh enough and suggested that more be added, including a threat to the Iranian Government that if it failed to fulfill their demands they would take their own measures. His terms were as follows:

1. Written official apology for the outrage.
2. Dismissal of Governor of Shiraz and nomination of successor approved by us.
3. Punishment of tribes concerned and deposition and out-lawing of their chiefs.
4. Selection by us of gendarmerie officers in Kerman, Bushire, and Fars.
5. Arrest and expulsion of Wassmuss, disarmament and recall of all unrecognised German agents and emissaries and their followers throughout Persia.
6. Internment of escaped Austrian prisoners of war.
7. Indemnity of 20,000L. for murder of Officers. 3

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1. "Jām-i Jam", No. 17, July 20, 1915/Ramazān 7, 1333.  
 2. F.O. 416-63. Enc. No. 17. July 17, 1915. Government of India to Mr. Chamberlain.  
 3. F.O. 416-63. No. 253. Tehran, July 17, 1915. Marling to Grey.

Even Mr. Marling confessed that some of the terms, such as Nos. 5 and 6, were not within the power of the Iranian Government.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously the cabinet crisis in the capital and the lack of a responsible government resulted in no attention being paid to the British demands. The Indian Government considered that it would not be desirable to seize the southern ports of Iran such as Bushire, Bandar 'Abbās, Langah and Hurmuz, especially the first, which would involve the Shaykh of Muhamarah and "the estrangement of a valuable friend who has deserved well of British Government"<sup>2</sup>, and the possibility of stirring up the tribes along the pipeline; but in the case of necessity that should be done without notification to the Iranian Government to show the British intentions were serious.<sup>3</sup> However, "His Majesty's Government have considered it is necessary to assume temporary occupation of the port in order to safeguard British interests and lives and property of British subjects there."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, on 8th August 1915, the British military operation to occupy Bushire was successful and on the following day a proclamation was issued at Bushire:

#### Proclamation

The Government of His Britannic Majesty has issued instructions that His Majesty's forces now at Bushire shall immediately occupy the town and Island, assume the administration of Bushire and take control of the Customs House.

This action has been taken by His Majesty's Government, owing to the conviction which has been unwillingly forced upon them, that the Persian Government can no longer maintain order in Bushire and the neighbourhood, a conviction which has received fresh confirmation from

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 416-63. Enc. No. 17. July 17, 1915. Government of India to Mr. Chamberlain.

3. Ibid.

4. "The Times", Sept. 10, 1915.



the recent regrettable attack by tribesmen on Bushire in which two British officers were killed and three sepoy killed and wounded.

The situation is thus one which cannot be tolerated by His Majesty's Government who have therefore been compelled to take such measures as may be considered necessary in their own interests and will continue to occupy Bushire until such time as the Persian Government undertake to exact full reparation from the guilty parties for the recent attack and to comply with the other demands of the British Government.

No hostile action will be taken against the officials and people of Bushire unless they themselves take hostile measures.

In compliance with the orders of the exalted (British Government) the people of the Island of Bushire and all concerned should therefore take note that from this day I have taken over all Government of Bushire on behalf of the British Government.

A. P. Trevor, Major,  
Governor on behalf of the British Military  
Government. 1

The British Military Governor at Bushire issued many proclamations and notices containing various instructions to the people of Bushire and the surrounding regions; he also determined to punish the khāns who were responsible for the incident. The first one was Ra'īs 'Alī, the Khān of Dilwar; therefore, a proclamation was published addressing him.

To

Rais Ali and the inhabitants of Dilwar.  
Whereas acting in concert with other khans hostile to the British Government, Rais Ali of Dilwar and certain of his followers and some of people of Dashti invaded the Island of Bushire with hostile intention the British Residency, and shot two British officers and wounded three sepoy out of a patrol passing near-by and subsequently attacked the British outposts; the said Rais Ali is hereby informed that his village will be bombarded and the Towers and houses and a portion of

the date gardens destroyed on the 10th day of August 1915 as a partial retribution for the offence.

By order of the High British Government,  
A.P. Trevor, Major,  
Civil Administrator of Bushire. 1

On the other hand, the 'ulamā''s declaration for a holy war against the British had been proclaimed throughout the south; they also took advantage of publishing the correspondence between the British Viceroy and Shaykh Ḥusayn. The parties, especially the Democrats, and some anjumans were highly active and inflamed the feelings of the people and tribes in Shiraz, Kazirun and the south-west regions against the British. The confederation of khāns were preparing to face the British force at Dilvar. On 10th August, the village of Dilvar was under British naval bombardment and later on troops were landed. There was heavy fighting between tribesmen and the British force. According to the report from the gendarmerie at Barazjān to Major Pousette, Dilvar had been bombarded for three days and they estimated that there were 500 casualties on the British side and 400 from the tribes, which seemed exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> However, it seems that the result was not satisfactory from the British point of view, because later, on 9th September, the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, criticised the issuing of the warning proclamation to the people of Dilvar, and in replying to the Military Governor of Bushire, who had explained that it had been the custom to give a warning before any bombardment, he wrote:

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1. F.O. 371-2434. No. 1466. Enclosure No. 20. Trevor to F.S. of I.O.  
2. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 31, No. 114 1333 H.Q. Asad 31.



I am to explain that in the Hague Convention dealing with bombardment by naval forces it is laid down that —

"Unless military exigencies render it impossible, the commander of a naval attacking force will warn the authorities before commencing the bombardment."

This admits of wide discretion in deciding whether any notice of bombardment should be given, but since the Convention in question has not been acceded to by the Government of Persia its provisions are in no way legally binding in the Persian Gulf on His Majesty's Government ... although it may in the past have been the custom to give ample warning, under present circumstances it is considered that this is very undesirable since it allows the inhabitants to make all preparations to meet the attack and largely reduces the effect which it is intended to produce ... 1

The reaction of the Iranian Court — in the absence of a responsible government —, the Majlis, people and press towards the occupation of Bushire by the British force, produced protests, demonstrations and hostile actions. On 15th August, the Iranian Foreign Office submitted a letter of protest to the British Legation at Tehran:

According to the reports received by the Imperial Persian Government British troops have been landed at Bushire, all government departments have been taken possession of and the gendarmes have been forced to evacuate two of their posts ... I am bound to protest against the above mentioned measures which are entirely against the proprietary rights and independence of the Imperial Persian Government from taking these measures which may lead to serious consequences.

Ali Kuli, Moshavar-ul-Mamalik. 2

In reply to the Iranian protest, Mr. Marling was of the opinion that "in the absence of a cabinet no official cognizance could be taken of the attack on H. M.'s Residency at Bushire, it seemed to me

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1. F.O. 371-2436. No. 1629. Simla, Sept. 9, 1915. F.S. of I. G. to Cox.
  2. F.O. 371-2436. No. 116. Gulhak, Oct. 2, 1915. Marling to F.O.

useless to take any notice of this protest at the time."<sup>1</sup> There was preparation in Shiraz for a campaign to be carried out against the British force at Bushire. British subjects were threatened and ready to leave the city. Mr. Marling reported that "occupation of Bushire and other operation have caused considerable excitement at Shiraz where consul describes situation as critical."<sup>2</sup> Mukhbir us-Saltānah wrote that there was no doubt that all the people were totally dejected about Bushire<sup>3</sup> and "Bāmdād-i Raushan", in an article entitled "The Living Fars", after supporting the agitation of the people of Fars against British violations in the south, believed that the British would not have any benefit from the new policy and wrote:

Bushire would not be easy to swallow ... Must it not be admitted, the opinion of those acknowledged persons who firmly have said and say that the British are worse than the Russians for Iran? ... The Russians during their anti-Iranian activities have not acted as the British did in Bushire ... 4

"The Near East", a year or so later, commented on the Bushire incident:

Turco-German intrigues received a sudden stimulus from the occupation of Bushire by British troops, when an unfortunate mistake in connection with Persian flag provided an opportunity for misrepresenting the action of the Allies. 5

Sykes wrote: "The temporary occupation of Bushire by the British, [was] a step that afforded German propaganda a real chance, which was fully exploited."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 416-63. No. 288. Tehran, Aug. 19, 1915. Marling to Grey.

3. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 278.

4. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 80, Aug. 29, 1915/Shavvāl 17, 1333.

5. "The Near East", Oct. 20, 1916.

6. Sykes, A History of Persia, op. cit., II, 444.



In the other cities the conditions were by no means better. In Tehran, the opposition had been trying to rouse popular feeling against the Russians and British by means of street preaching and distributing leaflets. In Isfahan some of the clergy took the lead in rousing the people, proclaiming a holy war and preparing them for war. The Governor-General was almost powerless and the city was under the control of the clergy and anti-Allied people; but the Bakhtiyārī khāns kept quiet and apparently were friendly to the British. In Kermanshah the German interference in the anti-Allied movement was open and direct and resulted in the conflict at Kangavar.

#### The Conflict at Kangāvar

Kangāvar is a small town situated on the road from Hamadan to Kermanshah, forty-four miles from the former and fifty-seven from the latter, in a district of the same name in the east of Kermanshah Province.

It is necessary to look at the background of the conflict which took place between two opposing sides in the First World War in a neutral country. Considering that Kermanshah's geographical location was of strategic importance from the German point of view during the war, because it was the nearest and main city on the road to the Turkish frontier, it is surprising that it had not been occupied by either the Russian or British forces. Therefore, all German communications and transport through the rest of Iran, Afghanistan and India had to pass through this city. The German Legation in Tehran intended to despatch a consul to Kermanshah because of its vital importance to the Germans. Herr Schunemann had been appointed as the German Consul at Tabriz; he arrived in Kermanshah from Baghdad because Tabriz was under Russian occupation, and stayed in Kermanshah and

started successful propaganda for German influence and anti-Entente activities. There had occurred a few collisions between the Iranian tribes and Turkish forces under the command of Ḥusayn Ra'ūf Bayg on the Turkish-Iranian frontier in the western part of Kermanshah Province during the year 1915. The Turkish force passed over the Iranian border and occupied Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, Sarpul-i Żahāb, Kerend and Hārūnābād (now called Shāhābād).<sup>1</sup> There was heavy fighting between the Kerendis and the Turkish force, which resulted in many Kerendis dead and wounded and in the destruction of the town; the people were homeless, had fled or scattered in the mountains around the town.

This incident caused twenty Democrat deputies in the Majlis to interpellate Farmān Farmā, Minister for the Interior at the time, and to claim that he had no intention of soothing the discord between the Iranian tribes and Turkish forces and consequently would bring both Muslim neighbours to a stage of war against each other. The interpellation resulted in the resignation of 'Ayn ud-Daulah's cabinet. However, the threat of the Turkish force to Kermanshah and the activities of the German consul, who was strongly supported by the Democrat Party's members in the city, caused the British and Russian Consuls and residents to move from Kermanshah to Hamadan, leaving the city in the hands of the Germans and anti-Entente people. The Iranian Government protested the Turkish force's advance into Iranian territory and caused a great deal of negotiation between representatives of the two countries. Schunemann succeeded in becoming the mediator between Ḥusayn Ra'ūf Bayg and the Iranian authorities, and a sort of agreement was arrived at, whereby the Turkish force would withdraw to Sarpul-i

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1. On the road to Baghdad, west of Kermanshah: Qaṣr-i Shīrīn to Kermanshah, 177 km.; Sarpul-i Żahāb to Kermanshah, 147 km.; Kerend to Kermanshah, 99 km.; Shāhābād to Kermanshah, 64 km.



Żahāb and later to the Turkish frontier. Consequently, the region came under German influence.

In August 1915, the Russian and British Legations in Tehran, after the withdrawal of the Turkish force, in order to repress German influence in Kermanshah Province, decided to despatch their consuls back to Kermanshah, with an escort of Iranian and Russian Cossacks and private forces; they also asked the Iranian Government to order the Kermanshah authorities to welcome them with a special ceremony, with representatives of the 'ulamā', the authorities and the people to meet them and with entertainment of a march and music.

On the other hand, Schunemann had celebrated the fall of Warsaw in Kermanshah and invited all classes of people to join him. The next day leaflets were issued in the city:

We thought that this was a neutral country. When we arrived, our enemy representatives had sent an official notice which stated that "if you enter the city, you will be arrested. We shall not let any German enter this city.", as if they considered this country belonged to them. However, we came without taking any action or coming into collision with them; they fled ... We helped you people when we could and tried to prevent the people of this province from coming to any harm ... They want to return to the city in company with private and Russian forces ... inevitably we have to collect a force in order to oppose them ... unfortunately, we see that their entrance and use of arms damages the helpless people of the city; besides that, the Turkish force ... which you would naturally not like to arrive in the city, (will come) to oppose them ... We asked them as friends not to enter and they did not, but at this time their enemies obliged them to move in this direction ...

Under these circumstances, we have to declare ... we shall not let them enter the city ... we ask respectfully that the people do not panic and remain neutral ... we assure that we will not let the people sustain one dīnār's damage. 1

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 6, No. 62. 26 Ramazān/16 Asad 1333.

On Sunday, 8th August, the British and Russian Consuls, who were escorted by seventy Iranian and Russian Cossacks and thirty professional savars, proceeded from Hamadan to Kermanshah. They arrived at Kangāvar and received the news of Schunemann's force approaching towards Kangāvar. Therefore they remained in the town and the consuls stayed at the residence of the governor, Mīrzā Faraj Allāh Khān, son of Sarī Aṣlān, the khān of Kangāvar.

Meanwhile, Schunemann had been preparing a force to prevent the consuls from entering Kermanshah. The city was in a panic because not only had the people been afraid of the imminent collision between the German and Entente forces, but there was also a rumour that the Turkish force would enter the city very soon. In the capital the reports from Kermanshah were unsatisfactory. "The Governor's administration was hopeless; pro-German and pro-Entente were acting and planning against each other ... The German gold and British liras are prevalent."<sup>1</sup> Mr. McDouall, the British Consul at Kermanshah, reported that

Most of the people are much annoyed at the Democrats helping the Germans and several meetings have been held at Jillī-ed-Daulah's house which had resulted in over a thousand Democrats joining the Moderate party ... these say they will not assist foreigners but most of them are secretly ready to help us. 2

At Kermanshah some of the local representatives visited Schunemann and expressed their anxiety about the imminent conflict between the two forces; they asked him not to prevent the consuls' arrival in the city and professed their fear of the Turkish force's interference.

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 248-1112. No. 48. Camp Hamadan, Sept. 1, 1915. McDouall.



Schunemann disagreed with the first request, but took note of the second and said that he would not ask for the help of Ḥusayn Ra'ūf Bayg, the commander of the Turkish force.

On 7th August Schunemann, in company with five hundred savars from the tribes of Sanjābī, Kalhur and Nazar 'Alī Khān, left Kermanshah for Bīsītūn and Şāḥnah. Mr. McDouall, the British Consul, who was in Kangavar at the time, believed that Schunemann's forces consisted probably of two hundred men and two Maxims, comprised of men from the tribes of Nazar 'Alī Khān, Lūr, Kūrān and also Kākāvand and Khizil.<sup>1</sup> Schunemann camped at Şāḥnah and opened correspondence with the governor of Kangāvar. He received a letter from the governor that he had been ordered by the Iranian Government to prevent him from approaching Kangāvar. The location of Kangāvar, from a strategic point of view, is an important military point in the west of Iran; it is surrounded by many hills and mountains. To the west, on the road to Kermanshah, there is a pass named Bīd-i Surkh. The safety of the town depended on possessing and defending the pass. The governor's savars, which have been estimated at about fifty men, were guarding that pass.

The British and Russian Ministers in Tehran wrote a letter to Iqbāl ud-Daulah, the Kermanshah Governor-General, who was in Tehran at the time, asking him to prevent the German Consul's action and wanting him to ensure the safety of their consuls' arrival in Kermanshah.<sup>2</sup> The governor communicated the matter to the government and the Iranian Government ordered Major Edwal, in command of two hundred

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1. "Shūrā", No. 88, Aug. 19, 1915/Shavvāl 7, 1333. There were some reports that the Shunemann force consisted of 1,000 men.

2. "Irshād", No. 101, Aug. 24, 1915/Shavvāl 12, 1333.

gendarmes, to proceed to Kangāvar, also the Cossack Brigade in Sanandaj had received a command to advance to Kangāvar to escort the British and Russian Consuls to Kermanshah. The latter force was the nearest viable Iranian force to aid the consuls, but it would take four days to reach Kangavar. Schunemann had anticipated that; therefore, on 25th August, his forces set out from Şāhnaḥ for Kangāvar and after some brief shooting in the early morning of the next day, were able to occupy the hills and pass and his force was able to command the approaches to the town and the Hamadan road. According to Mr. McDouall's report, the Kangāvar Governor, in replying to his question about surrendering the hills to Schunemann's force, said "He could not now depend on anyone but his household servants."<sup>1</sup> In fact Schunemann's force had some supporters in the town because later on the Iranian Cossacks complained that there had been some shots from the town. Mr. McDouall believed that the people of Kangavar might be divided into three classes: "those who do not want trouble", those who were pro-German, and "men who can be bought".<sup>2</sup> However, Schunemann sent an ultimatum to the governor, saying he would give the consuls three hours to leave; otherwise, he would attack, and he did so. The two sides fired many shots and Schunemann's force was able to occupy all the hills around the town and surrounded the Entente's forces and blocked the Hamadan road. The reports about casualties are slightly different -- two or four dead on the side of the Germans and one or two on the other side and several wounded on both. At least some of the Kangāvar 'ulamā' met Schunemann, asked him to avoid bloodshed and arranged a meeting between the governor and Schunemann which

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1. F.O. 248-1112. No. 46. Hamadan, Aug. 28, 1915.

2. F.O. 248-1112. No. 49. Hamadan, Sept. 8, 1915.



resulted in a cease-fire, the opening of the Hamadan road and allowing the consuls and their forces to leave. In the afternoon of the same day, they left the town escorted by the governor and his savars and reached Asadābād, a town on the road to Hamadan, nineteen miles from Kangāvar and twenty-five miles from Hamadan. There was no incident on the way and the day after they proceeded to Hamadan. Schunemann also left Kangāvar for Şahnah, as soon as he heard the consuls had reached Asadābād, and when he was informed that the Allied Consuls had arrived at Hamadan, he left Şahnah for Kermanshah. According to the German Embassy's article in a Tehran newspaper, which was published on 30th August, Schunemann reported the Kangāvar incident as follows:

Yesterday, 14th of Shavvāl [26th of August], in the early morning we arrived in the suburbs of Kangavar; the Russian and British Consuls saw and recognised me on a hill under my country's flag through a telescope from the city, and immediately seventy Cossacks and thirty Iranian armed men fired at us and naturally my savars fired back at them. In three hours we surrounded the town and succeeded in occupying the necessary entrenchments, so that they could not flee. At this time the governor visited me and asked for three hours' respite to open the Hamadan road. Because I did not like bloodshed I assured them that the consuls could leave for Hamadan ... 1

In Tehran the Kangāvar incident caused a series of diplomatic problems, especially at a time when the Iranian Government intended to come to good terms with the Allies and apparently had tried hard to find a way to despatch some Iranian troops to protect the Russian and British Consuls at Kangāvar. But the government protested against Schunemann's actions and requested the German Minister in Tehran to discharge Schunemann from his post.

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1. "‘Asr-i Jadīd", No. 60. Aug. 30, 1915/Shavvāl 18, 1333; I.F.O., C. 66, f. 6. No. 61. 1333.

The Tehran newspapers interpreted the Kangāvar conflict as a regrettable incident. "Irshād" criticised the country's administration, for the Kermanshah Governor, Iqbāl ud-Daulah, had been in Tehran for financial reasons for a few months. Then the writer continued:

... and if Schunemann believed that had the Iranian Government been able to defend its rights, such an incident would not have happened and they would not have interfered at all ... he had to defend himself and, apparently as he claimed, the Kermanshah people from the Russian troops which have been seen in many cities and even the capital was threatened by their maneuver ... the consuls were escorted by some Russian troops ... the German Consul would have done it even if only for his own protection ... 1

"Shūrā" interpreted the conflict from another angle and, after professing its regret about the event, stated that the only reason for the incident was the ignoring of Iran's neutrality; if the Russians had withdrawn their forces from Iranian territory and the British Government had assisted the Iranian Government's request in Petrograd for the evacuation of the Russian force, events such as Azarbaijan, Bushire, Kermanshah and Kangāvar would not have occurred.<sup>2</sup> "Shihāb-i Sāqib" discussed the disturbed condition of Iran and foreign intrigues in the country and wrote:

They say the German Consul opposed the arrival of the Allied Consuls in Kermanshah. It would be good if they remembered at first which country's envoy committed such an action and arrested the consul of their hostile countries ... which country disregarded the Iranian Government's request and plea for respecting its neutrality. 3

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1. "Irshād", No. 96, Aug. 12, 1915/Ramazān 30, 1333.
  2. "Shūrā", No. 89, Aug. 31, 1915/Shavvāl 19, 1333.
  3. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 78, Aug. 19, 1915/Shavvāl 7, 1333.



The German Legation at Tehran, in replying to the Iranian Government's protest and demand for discharging Schunemann, sent a letter to the Majlis and to Tehran's newspapers, explaining the Kangāvar conflict and blaming the British and Russians for the collision; it considered Schunemann's action self-defence and then added:

... They say it is the neutral government's duty to escort them to their posts ... we agree with this point if Iran is neutral, but they have not respected its rights for a long time ... Certainly, those who are trying to keep their rights must not subvert others. On the contrary, anywhere they possessed power or opportunity prevented our consuls from remaining at their posts, such as at Tabriz, Bushire ... At Tabriz they plundered our houses, confiscated our factories ... killed our merchants ... captured our passengers on the road to Bahbahān and sent them to India ... Have they committed those works with the Iranian Government's permission or with all those irregular and unacceptable tasks, how do they respect the neutrality of Iran? 1

However, the Kangāvar conflict was considered a German reaction to both powers' attitude towards the German representatives in Iran. On the other hand, the British and Russians understood that the region of Kermanshah was so vital to the Germans that they would stand against any hard measures in any case; and also at that moment the British and Russians were not able to do anything or take any action.

#### The Situation of Iran and Allied Activities

Azarbaijan was facing a catastrophe during the First World War and matters were more serious than in other parts of Iran; combat between the Turkish and Russian forces and their native allies resulted in the massacre of thousands of people, famines, destruction of hundreds of villages, and thousands of refugees and homeless. The other parts

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1. "‘Asr-i Jadīd", No. 59, Aug. 28, 1915/Shavvāl 16, 1333.

of the country were under Russian or British forces or were in disorder.

Public agitation against the great powers made such an impression on the country's atmosphere that those among the courtiers, politicians, authorities and even those who were well-known as friends of the British or Russians, kept silent and tried to avoid being accused of having communications with either country. The nationalists, as well as the pro-Germans and Pan-Islamists, controlled most of the cities which were not occupied by the British or Russian forces. The Russian Ambassador in Tehran reported to Petrograd: "Germans with their Mujahids and gendarmerie are virtually masters in some of the chief towns of Persia -- Shiraz, Ispahan, Kermanshah; they endeavouring to reproduce same conditions in Tehran itself."<sup>1</sup>

Under those circumstances, the Iranian Government attempted to come to terms with both powers and improve conditions, but it was faced with enormous difficulties -- an empty treasury, disorder, and all the catastrophes of the war, as Mr. MacLean wrote to Mr. Greenway:

The Persians are allowing their own affairs to drift most helplessly. The financial administration has been wilfully disorganized, the revenues are neglected and pilfered, the police, gendarmerie and other executive branches are months in arrears, and the Government debts are accumulated. Local disorders spread day by day ... 2

As far as the Iranian Government and Majlis were concerned, there was no sign of any change or modification in the Allied policy towards Iran; nevertheless, the government intended to control and reduce the public agitation and disturbance in the country in order to obtain a

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 303. Tehran, Aug. 29, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
2. F.O. 371-2426. Tehran, Aug. 26, 1915. MacLean to Greenway.



better ground for negotiation with foreign countries and to maintain neutrality. Therefore, the Iranian Government ordered a ban on the anti-Allied demonstrations which had been taking place in the Maydān-i Bahāristān outside the Majlis gate, and even when it was shifted to the Masjid-i Shāh in the Bāzār, the preachers were not allowed to preach. The Prime Minister held a meeting with the editors of Tehran's newspapers, asking for their support and assistance in appeasing public excitement and to stop inflaming the political tension of the people. He also wished to summon some Bakhtiyārī savars to assist the police in controlling the capital. Other steps which Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's cabinet took included ordering the governors of the provinces to maintain neutrality. The Tehran newspaper "Parvardīn" was shut down because of its bitter attack on Vusūq ud-Daulah's appointment to the cabinet; he threatened that he would resign unless the newspaper was closed.<sup>1</sup> However, the government showed its inclination toward the Allies; but this inclination, particularly the protest to the German Legation about the Kangavar incident and the request for the dismissal of Schunemann, was considered as a contradiction of government policy, which was one-sided, and raised commentaries and arguments in Tehran political societies and newspapers.

"Shihāb-i Sāqib", in an article referring to the background of the two powers' influence in Iran and their interference in the country's political, economic and administrative matters, stated:

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1. Sipīhr, 198.

At the time of Nāṣir ud-Dīn Shāh they started apparently in a friendly benevolent way; later on, they called it advice and then, in the name of protecting their interests, finally changed it to demands and orders. Again after a while, they said that Iran must consider our talks as a minor to its guardian; recently the matter increased seriously and their statements are as a lord orders his waiter ... Mercy and justice in the law of the new imperialistic culture are absurd and meaningless ... This government has to clear its policy and should not be deceived by talk ... 1

The pro-Democrat newspaper "Naubahār" believed that Iran's failure in fundamental reforms was due to the effect of the attraction and repelling of both powers' policy and continued: "At this time it is pressed by four powers instead of two ... each one in the name of preventing the opposition's activities landed their blows on our weak body."<sup>2</sup> The writer expressed his opinion on Iranian foreign policy and stated that in spite of the fact that Iran was neutral and wished to have friendly relations with all countries, neither side in the war was satisfied; furthermore, they were deeply suspicious of Iran's policy. The writer complained:

If anyone read "Novoye Vremya" and other Russian articles outside of the country, he would think that the Germans and Turks are of such influence that all the country is under their power. At the same time, if someone talks to the German or Turkish politicians about Iran, he will hear that all Iran is under the domination of the Russians and British. 3

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" criticised the British foreign policy towards Islamic countries and particularly attacked Sir Edward Grey's attitude in those matters and referred to British policy in Egypt and its treaty

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 81, Aug. 30, 1915/Shavvāl 18, 1333.
  2. "Naubahār", No. 65, Aug. 13, 1915/Shavvāl 1, 1333.
  3. Ibid.



with France about Morocco; it believed that British popularity had decreased and by the Convention of 1907 it had lost what little remained in Iran: "Britain, which is the Mother of Constitutions and Democracy, hand in hand with a despotic government's seeking an opportunity to swallow the weak countries ..."<sup>1</sup>

However, the Iranian Government was well aware of the critical condition of the country and its responsibility for the future of Iran; therefore, in following the cabinet's program it used the utmost endeavours to achieve the policy of neutrality and to save the country from annihilation. In spite of the fact that the Iranian Government understood that the British and Russians were following a policy along the same lines in Iran, it nevertheless opened a series of negotiations with the British Legation in Tehran. This attitude of the Iranian Government towards the British even at that time was due mostly to its following the old policy which earlier governments had used to modify the obstinacy of Russian policy through British diplomatic relations with Russia. This Iranian tendency towards the British had been considered as total helplessness, as Mr. Marling reported:

Knowing their helpless cabinet is appealing to the two legations for support, but they are conscious that by doing so they will alienate Democrats who have already attacked them in press for inclusion of Vusuq-ud-Dowlah and Sipahdar. 2

Mr. Marling thought, however, that the cabinet would not last long; even if they did not try for its fall, the opposition would and he stated that "it is better for us that its fall should be composed by its late friend than by us."<sup>3</sup> The Iranian Government tried constantly

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 78, Aug. 19, 1915/Shavvāl 7, 1333.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 297. Tehran, Aug. 26, 1916. Marling to Grey.
  3. Ibid.

to find a solution to the deadlock of the relations between the country and both powers; but not only had they refused to honour that support and assistance which had been promised to the previous government, they also insisted on the fulfillment of their demands, such as the British demands concerning the conflicts between British forces and Iranian tribesmen in the south. Consequently, the Iranian Government was unable to improve the state of affairs without any assistance and was disappointed in its dealing with the two powers.

Meanwhile, the situation in Iran grew favourable to the anti-Allies, owing to some German victories in Europe and especially to the war in the Dardanelles, news of which reached Iran by the German wireless every day. This superiority of receiving immediate news from the fronts had a tremendous effect on German propaganda. Moreover, the scheme of the German anti-Allied propaganda and the exaggeration of the news of the war in Iran had "greatly increased the Iranian belief in the ultimate German victory and guarantee of Iranian independence."<sup>1</sup>

It is certainly easy enough for the Germans to dangle before the eyes of the Persians the prospect of the end of Anglo-Russian control in Persia, and to promise them the help of Turco-German armies for the deliverance of the country. 2

Although British forces had occupied the southern part of Iran, this had almost no effect on the capital; on the contrary, it roused the people against the British. The consul in Shiraz wrote that: "The method of our occupation of Bushire, i.e., removal of flag, has given German party a splendid war-cry against us."<sup>3</sup> The British

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1. F.O. 371-2426. Tehran, Sept. 2, 1915. H.W. MacLean to Greenway.
  2. "The Near East", Aug. 13, 1915.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 306. Tehran, Aug. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.



Ministers in London and Tehran were of the opinion that the reinforcement of Russian troops in Iran would appease public irritation and handicap the Turko-German activities; therefore, Grey ordered Buchanan, the British Minister at Petrograd, to discuss the critical condition in Iran and to ask the Russian Government for the immediate despatch of Russian troops to Iran, but the Russians were engaged on the south-western frontiers and the viceroy of the Caucasus "had declared (he) had no troops to spare for Persia".<sup>1</sup> Concerning Iranian affairs, Mr. Marling reached the conclusion that they had to choose between two alternatives: first, "to abandon frankly effect to induce or force Iran to adopt a policy of real neutrality"<sup>2</sup>; this involved a military operation which was improbable at the moment; secondly,

To secure loyalty of principal tribes, and especially Bakhtiari, it is a question of money ... they are, as a tribe, under the influence of their traditional friendship with us and belief in our power, that they prefer our money to German and at this moment could induce them to collect a sufficient force at Ispahan to disarm the German. 3

The amount of money that he suggested was about 200,000 tūmāns. The suggestion was under consideration by the British Government; meanwhile, both powers agreed to join their efforts to defend and protect their interest and other matters should be considered as of secondary importance.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, their legations at Tehran were instructed to have closer coordination in their activities and were authorised to do what they could to their best abilities. The British Government also

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 1130. Tehran, Aug. 9, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 276. Tehran, Aug. 10, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. Ibid.
  4. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1136. Petrograd, Aug. 10, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.

allowed the minister at Tehran to have sufficient credit for his expenditures and the amount of 200,000 tūmāns for having an agreement with the khāns. The legations at Tehran and their consulates and agents in other cities began to take strong action to soothe the people's repulsion in any possible way. The main attempts were to influence the Shah, to make the government deal with their interests or to overthrow them and to put pressure on the Majlis. It happened that the British and Russian Ministers in Tehran, without having any appointment and at any time, could insist on meeting the Shah; they advised and threatened him and told him that he might lose his throne, but the Shah accepted no responsibility for the country's affairs and "negotiations with him were unsatisfactory. His Majesty appears to be very much under enemy influence."<sup>1</sup>

The Majlis presented the strongest opposition against Russian and British policy in Iran, and the government's proposals would be rejected if it contained further influence of both great powers in the country. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs was of the opinion that the way to put an end to the Majlis was "calling back the ex-shah who would make short work of Medjliss which were at bottom of trouble."<sup>2</sup> The British Minister in Tehran sent a message to the Majlis in which he said, "We shall execute the opposition."<sup>3</sup> Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā'ī on behalf of the Majlis replied, "We do our duties for the Iranian nation and you may execute us at any time you are able."<sup>4</sup>

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 316. Tehran, Sept. 4, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1130. Petrograd, Aug. 9, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.
  3. Farukh Mu'tasim us-Saltānah, Khātirāt-i Siyāsī-yi Farukh (ed. Parvīz Lūshānī, Tehran, 1347 H.S.), 9-10.
  4. Ibid.



The British and Russians, in continuation of their rough policy, avoided coming to terms with the Iranian Government at that time, particularly when the Iranian gendarmerie had been defeated in two conflicts with rebel tribes, one in Luristan in which casualties reached about 200 men and arms and ammunition were lost. The other incident happened near Qazvin with the Shāhsavān tribe and during the combat Captain Hierta, the commander of the gendarmerie, was killed. Colonel Edwall, the chief officer commanding at Tehran, stated that "pour le moment 800 gendarmes sont disaprus et je n'en sais rien de leur avenir, mais espere en retrouver la plus part."<sup>1</sup> In addition to these disappointing affairs, other problems in the country frustrated the state of relations between Iran and the Entente. Therefore, the Allies sought another alternative to stop anti-Allied activities and also stressed to the government the necessity of accepting their terms or they would be overthrown for a pro-Allied cabinet.

In relating to public opinion, some famous Tehran newspapers, such as "‘Aṣr-i Jadīd", which were pro-Allied, published some articles against German activities in Iran; but apparently they did not publish any article which could be considered as open support for the British and Russians. In other cities, the consulates endeavoured to negotiate with the khāns and to conclude agreements with them, especially the British in the south with the Bakhtiyārī khāns, through whose region oil pipes were laid, and other important tribes. They also published many pamphlets and leaflets, explaining that the Germans and Turks intended to use Iranians for their own purposes; for instance, there is an eight-page pamphlet, not dated or signed, entitled "A message

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 110. Tehran, Aug. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.

to the religious and homeland brothers".<sup>1</sup> It begins with the name of God and a verse from the Qur'ān (Sūrat al-baqara, v. 195). The writer tried to prove there was no reason for the 'ulamā' to declare a holy war. Consequently he rejected the 'ulamā''s proclamations for a jihād against the British and Russians. He criticised the Turkish Government, which had refused the Allies' proposals and joined the Germans for no reason but to destroy Turkey and involve other Muslim countries in the war. The writer regarded Irano-Turkish relations and attacked the Turks and asked why, if the Turks' reasons, as they claimed, for taking part in the war was zeal of Islam, they had not helped Iran in the wars with Russia or Britain in the past. Then he mentioned some cases of Turkish maltreatment of Iranian residents in that country, especially in Najaf, Karbalā' and other holy cities in Iraq. The writer also referred to Irano-German relations and mentioned Article 18 of the Irano-German Convention of Rabī' us-Sānī 1290 H.Q./ June 1873, in which the Germans undertook to assist Iran in the case of any disagreement with other countries; he added that during these recent years when Iran needed assistance urgently the Germans did not pay attention to this matter. The writer apparently referred to the Germano-Russian convention of Potsdam, August 1911, when he wrote: "On the other hand (Germany's) Ambassador at Petrograd asked the Russians to let the Germans have a free hand in the north of Iran."<sup>2</sup> It seems that he had made a mistake; according to the Potsdam agreement, it was vice versa. However, the conclusion of the writer's message was that there were no founds for a jihād and the Iranian people and government should remain neutral.

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 96. 1333 H.Q.

2. Ibid.



Meanwhile the legations in Tehran and consulates in other cities had been following the traditional policy, probably the most effective measure, which was to use the influence of those Iranians in all classes of society, such as courtiers, politicians, tribal chiefs, clergy, merchants and others who had been serving the British and Russians as a family inheritance or were ready to do so at that moment. The important part of these group activities was to use their utmost effort to appease the people's irritation and neutralise anti-Allied propaganda. For instance, there was a long discussion between the Ministers of Britain and Russia in Tehran and their governments on the return to Iran of Zill us-Sultān, the son of Muzaffar ud-Dīn Shāh, who was ill and quite old. Both powers wished to take advantage of his influence at the court or at least to have him installed as Governor-General of Isfahan, where he had a great deal of land and which was the centre of German activities. He would then be able to use his power to stop German propaganda and anti-Allied supporters.

Your Excellency,

I write these few lines to thank Your Excellency for your letter of last October, for having been good enough to renew His British Majesty's protection for myself and all my family.

I also take the occasion to assure you once more of all my sympathy and friendship for your Government which dates from many years, and to offer you also all my personal services, in Persia in the present crisis. I have also telegraphed to my friends and sons at Ispahan and Teheran, to remain at the disposal of the British and Russian Ministers at Teheran, and to do their best in helping them if they are wanted. I have also written on the same subject to His Excellency the Russian Ambassador in Paris.

signed Zil-us-Sultan. 1

In Tehran, powerful men such as Farmān Farmā, who was well-known as a friend of the Allies, received some money to assist the spread of propaganda in favour of the Allies. The British Foreign Affairs Minister wrote to Marling:

Russian Government agree to payment of subsidy of £1000 to Farman Farma ... merely expect him in accordance with his promise to check agitation and to win over public opinion ... the subsidy might be continued so long as he remains true ... 1

The Foreign Office asked for Marling's opinion on whether or not the same amount should be paid on behalf of the British.

Although Mr. Marling was quite optimistic about their activities against Germany and Turkey, especially the Iranian nationalists, as he reported:

Meantime we have succeeded ... in creating a body of opinion among the more educated and substantial classes strongly opposed to the fatuous tolerance which the Persian Government has up till now exhibited to the Germans and their intrigues. 2

it seemed that it had not affected public opinion so much, which was full of hatred for both powers' maltreatment, especially during recent years.

The British Minister in Tehran, in a meeting with the Prime Minister, suggested that they wished "to secure the presence of sufficient number of [Bakhtiyārī] Sowars at Isfahan and Tehran to deter the Germans from attempting to create disorder, in fact to make Persian authorities masters in these towns ..." <sup>3</sup> They also were willing to

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1. F.O. 371-2428. No. 166. F.O., July 6, 1915. to Marling.
  2. F.O. 416-63. No. 111. Tehran, Sept. 1, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 301. Tehran, Aug. 29, 1915. Marling to Grey.



assist with expenses.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister replied that he had already instructed the khāns to bring sufficient forces to Tehran but "he could not see his way to accept any monetary help except as a part of large scheme of financial assistance."<sup>2</sup> This desire of the Iranian Government was out of the question at that time for both powers.

In relation to the Bakhtiyārī khāns, the British scheme did not turn out satisfactory either. In the negotiations between the khāns and the British representatives, the khāns "as a part of the agreement, ... will want an assurance that Ispahan will not be left in the Russian sphere of influence."<sup>3</sup> According to the new Anglo-Russian agreement, Isfahan was already in the Russian zone. Grey warned the minister in Tehran: "but you should avoid, if possible, any discussion as to Ispahan and in no case should you give any undertaking in regard to it being removed from Russian sphere."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the khāns were not as friendly to the British as expected. The British Minister in Tehran believed that the khāns were "playing a double game"; he reported: "Bakhtiari are professing here and at Ispahan that they cannot bring sowars without orders from Government and Prime Minister will try to make these orders condition of leaving Bushire."<sup>5</sup> He added that "of course, Khans are making use of this opportunity to squeeze us for money."<sup>6</sup>, but further negotiation between the khāns and the British Legation concerning money failed. The khāns stated that they could not accept direct payments from the British for their savars.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 276. Tehran, Aug. 10, 1915. Marling to Grey.

4. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 223. F.O., Aug. 11, 1915. Grey to Marling.

5. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 298. Tehran, Aug. 28, 1915. Marling to Grey.

6. Ibid.

Mr. Marling believed that the khāns were joining in the government tactics to squeeze the British in the interests of themselves and the cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

Time was against both powers, especially the British. Conditions in the country became worse; the consul in Shiraz reported: "Unless we do something to soothe wide spread irritation ... It may be impossible for Khans to resist pressure which is being brought to bear upon them to join campaign against English."<sup>2</sup>

#### Problems in the South

The Iranian Government tried to take advantage of the time and to reach a settlement with the powers. The negotiations between the Iranian Government and the legations had been continued but were not conclusive, so that, on 28th August 1915, the Iranian Government agreed in principle to the condition which has been mentioned before, with an exception as to the amount of the indemnity, and suggested that the Governor-General of Fars be recalled and Iranian authority restored at Bushire simultaneously. The British troops would be allowed to remain until any danger of further attacks was past. The Iranian Government would be obliged to put an end to German agitation and would punish the khāns who had been involved in the attack as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup>

The British Minister at Tehran felt that the proposal should be considered and that the most important article was the removal of the Governor-General of Shiraz, who had been considered an "instrument of

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 302. Tehran, Aug. 29, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 306. Tehran, Aug. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 300. Tehran, Aug. 29, 1914. Marling to Grey.



German agitation in the south and his removal would be a decisive blow to them in Persian eyes."<sup>1</sup> He asked his government to agree with the proposal, with the modification that Iranian authority not be restored at Bushire until the Governor-General of Fars had definitely left and Qavām ul-Mulk appointed acting Governor-General. The Legation was also to be consulted in the selection of two new Governors of Bushire and Shiraz.<sup>2</sup> Grey replied to Mr. Marling:

I realise fully that inability of two powers to send strong forces to Persia renders it difficult to negotiate with success. I must therefore leave it to you to make the best use you can of the lever such as it is afforded by our occupation of Bushire, though you will doubtless bear following desiderata in mind; Persent Governor-General should be removed immediately. Substantive appointment of Kawam as his successor would be desirable ... Persian Government should also, as preliminary to evacuation of Bushire, remove all German emissaries, not only from Shiraz but also from the whole district extending to sea coast, and to intern them. <sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile the Iranian Minister in London, in a meeting with the British Foreign Minister, suggested that the situation might be improved if the Iranian Governor were allowed to return to Bushire and the Iranian flag again be flown there, even if the British forces remained in occupation.<sup>4</sup> However, Mr. Marling modified this order because he believed that "it (would be) undesirable to demand substantive appointment of Kawam as it would arouse latent jealousy of Soulat, who is at the present on good terms with him"; and also to move German emissaries from Iran was beyond the powers of the Iranian Government.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the proposal took this final form:

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 244. B.F.O., Aug. 31, 1915. Grey to Marling.

4. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 245. F.O., Aug. 31, 1915. Grey to Marling.

5. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 310. Tehran, Sept. 1, 1915. Marling to Grey.

Restoration of Persian flag and civil authorities in Bushire as soon as Mukhber has left Shiraz and Kawam has taken charge from him as Acting Governor-General; new Governors of Bushire and Shiraz to be appointed with our concurrence.

Troops will remain at Bushire until all possibility of further attacks has passed. Persian Government to undertake effective measures against German agitation. Indemnity to be paid as laid down. 1

In spite of the fact that the Iranian Government accepted the removal of the Governor-General of Fars as a prior condition, the arrangement was suspended because the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs disagreed with the conditions, as Buchanan reported:

..., his Excellency expressed much concern at contemplated evacuation of Bushire. He thought it would be a grave mistake on our part to withdraw, and that preliminary removal of German emissaries would afford us no guarantee against their eventual return. 2

Concerning public opinion, the Iranian Government was obliged to consider the British occupation of the southern part of the country; therefore, on 2nd September 1915, following the protest of 15th August, it despatched a letter of protest to the British Legation at Tehran.

... according to fresh reports received by the Imperial Persian Government letters arriving in Persia are opened by the British Officials at Bushire who put a green label on them on which is written "In the name of H. M. King George, opened by the censor." The letters are also stamped in English "Bushire under English Occupation."

I am compelled to protest once more against the seizure of Bushire ... which has taken place in the time of peace and while perfect friendship existed between the two Governments. This measure which is contrary to the independence and the proprietary rights of Persia will add to the intensity of the public excitement and prolong the widespread movement against the British Government's unsatisfactory attitude.

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1276. Petrograd, Sept. 1, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.



I request Your Excellency to recommend to His Britannic Majesty's Government to abandon this attitude.

It is obvious that each of the measures above mentioned increases the responsibility of the British Government for the Government who are doing their utmost to maintain the relations between the states, the right to request to put an end to this situation and not to throw difficulties in the way of the Persian Government in the execution of their duty of maintaining the relations existing between the two countries.

Mothashem-es-Sultaneh. 1

On the same day, the British Legation at Tehran received another letter from the Iranian Foreign Office which protested against the British force's actions at Bushire, especially their arrest of some gendarmes, and also against the bombardment of Dilvar. The Iranian Foreign Minister, in the conclusion of the letter, stated:

In protesting against these harsh measures which in view of the friendship existing between the two states are matter for surprise and regret, I request Your Excellency to get orders issued by competent authorities for restoration of the arms, ammunition and for the release of the gendarme prisoners.

Mothashem-es-Sultaneh. 2

Mr. Marling, in replying to the Iranian Foreign Minister, stated that the British occupation of Bushire and the local administration of the city were matters between the British Government and the Military Governor at Bushire. He believed that those officers were responsible only to the British Government and "it was superfluous for him to discuss with the Iranian Government any action taken in the execution of their duty."<sup>3</sup> He took the opportunity to explain

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 116. British Legation Gulhek, Oct. 2, 1915. Marling to Grey; I.F.O., C. 66, f. 31, No. 117. Shavvāl 18, 1333.  
 2. Ibid.  
 3. F.O. 371-2436. No. 116. British Legation Gulhek, Sept. 9, 1915.

the reasons for the British military operation at Bushire. He referred to the incident of 12th July and the deaths of two British officers and some sepoys, then he added the Iranian Government's reaction to those matters:

Neither at the time nor subsequently has the Imperial Persian Government shown any official sign of a desire to make amends for so gross an outrage, and after waiting for some four weeks H. M. Government ordered the occupation of Bushire for the double purpose of protecting the Residency and British interests generally from further attack -- a task which I may observe is an obligation laid on the Persian Government by treaty -- and secondly to obtain the reparation which may justly be demanded. 1

The reparation which Mr. Marling was instructed to require from the Iranian Government was as follows:

1. The recall of the present Governor-General of Fars and the appointment of H. E. Kawam-ul-Mulk as temporary Governor pending the nomination of a new Governor-General to be selected in agreement with His Majesty's Legation.
2. The adequate punishment of the Khans implicated in the attack of 12th July.
3. The adoption of prompt and efficacious measures to put an end to the pernicious activities of the German and other agents directed against British interests in Persia and practised in flagrant violation of Persian neutrality.
4. The payment of suitable indemnity, viz -- stg 5000 in respect of each officer killed: stg 500 for each sepoy killed and stg 100 for each man wounded. 2

#### The Iranian Government's Struggle against Economic Crisis

The Iranian Government was under extreme pressure from both parties in the war. Moreover, internal problems stopped the government

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1. Ibid.
  2. Ibid.



from achieving any plans. Among their difficulties, the most serious one was the financial problem, for not even the treasury was able to pay its regular payment; the gendarmerie, one of the vital factors in the country's security, had not been paid for some months. Mr. Angman, the commander of the gendarmerie force in Shiraz, reported to Tehran that:

The condition is unbearable because there is no money, not even one shāhī in the cash office. It is 8 months since cereal has been received, 5 months since salaries have been paid and 4 months since rations have arrived. 1

The gendarmerie headquarters in Tehran had to close most gendarmerie posts because of the financial problem. They had to withdraw gendarmes from important roads, towns and cities, even from a city like Kerman.

The financial problem in the Ministry for War was by no means better. "Irshād", in an interview with the Assistant Minister for War, asked about the arrears of the Ministry. He replied:

1. The officers' salaries have not been received for three months.
2. The Artillery has been delayed for 11 months.
3. The War Ministry's administration has been delayed for 9 months.
4. The Arsenal has not received [anything] for 8 months. 2

Employees in other government departments in the capital had received no salary for several months; most of the offices were practically at a standstill and some of them were closed. The condition of employees in the provinces was even worse.

The country's political and social societies acknowledged the financial crisis of the country and tried to set up some activities to

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1. Sipih, 210.

2. "Irshād", No. 65, May 18, 1915/Rajab 3, 1333.

prevent the country from total collapse. There were a few suggestions in Tehran's newspapers, recommending the government to carry out one of their proposals; such as a general contribution or a tax on the identity cards which had been planned for the general population. The 'ulamā' had also been requested to take a part in this matter and to declare their decision about the financial involvement of the country. One of them, Ayāt Allāh Āqā Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Āqā'ī, stated:

Of course the government is involved in a financial deficiency in the country. This is due to the world conflict, decrease of trade and non-collection of revenue ... if ... it continues like this for a while, the total administration of the country will collapse ... under these circumstances, if the government is not supported by the nation urgently ... It is obvious what will be the result ... You are being requested to write in your handwriting the duties of a Muslim in this matter ... 1

This request and the mujtahid's answer were published and distributed throughout the country. The decision was that every Muslim should support the government to the best of their ability, to protect the peace of the Muslim people and to deter the foreigners' pretexts for interfering in the country. The people were even allowed to pay the sahm-i imām<sup>2</sup> on their properties to the government in order to save the country from imminent destruction.

The Iranian Government was so anxious about the increase in disturbances throughout the country, particularly in Tehran, that all its efforts were put into finding some money by any possible means.

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 104. Appendix.

2. The sahm-i imām is that part of the khums which belongs to the religious leader who collects the khums and which he uses to further religious purposes.



The government asked some Iranian merchants to mortgage the royal jewels. If the money could be obtained it would be paid to the Bakhtiyārī savars to come to Tehran in order to control the city; but none of the merchants ventured to help.

The government desperately shifted its attention to foreigners. The connection with the German Legation in Tehran for help ended up without achievement. Meanwhile the government negotiated with the United States Embassy in Tehran in order to receive a recommendation to an American bank to give a loan to the Iranian Government, guaranteed by the Iranian royal jewels. The conclusion was unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup>

The Iranian Government had no hope of achieving any negotiations with the Russians or of reaching any reasonable conclusion. So once more they turned to the British. The gravity of the situation in the southern part of the country had increased to the point of explosion. The British force and subjects were the main targets in Iran. The Iranian Government realised that unless they took necessary measures immediately, there was a strong possibility that the country would be dragged into the war against the Allies, which from the government's point of view was most undesirable at that time. In spite of the fact that public opinion was strongly against the great powers, the Iranian Government nevertheless showed more inclination towards the British, hoping that they might agree to come to better terms. Mr. Marling's opinion about the Iranian Government's partiality was:

I do not, however, believe that this partial change of attitude was due to any fear of future chastisement on the part of two powers. The impression created by the Russian retreat in Poland was too deep and it was rather from the consciousness that German intrigues had been allowed to go too far ... The same apprehension forced

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1. Abraham Yeselson, United States-Persian Diplomatic Relations 1889-1921 (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1956), 139.

even the Democrats to recognise that a Government of some kind must be formed, and as they recognised that a purely Democrat Ministry, even if accepted by the Mejliss, could not stand for a week, they left Mustofi a free hand to get support where he could. 1

The British and Russians were pessimistic about the Iranian Government's inclination towards them; and they feared that if the government fell, all their assistance would be used by their enemies. Therefore, not only did they not intend to help but they tried to get what they could out of the government before its fall.<sup>2</sup>

### Incitement in the South against the British

#### Isfahan

Apparently, the Iranian Government's authority did not extend further than to most of the capital. Those cities which had not been occupied by the Russian or British forces were run by local leaders. In Isfahan a committee from the 'ulamā' had been organised during the first year of the war. They had strong influence over the people and actually governed the city. The committee and the Democrats had close connections and there had been some meetings between both groups in Isfahan to discuss the country's affairs. The committee had also opened correspondence with the government and Majlis, such as the following letter:

... In the general conflicts of European countries, the Iranian people have obeyed the neutrality of the Government's policy. At this obvious juncture, (such) activities (as those) of the Shi'a sect's leaders in Iraq and the union of Islam (occurred). Up to now the peace and silence of the people is due to the utmost loyalty of the leaders to the Government and their efforts in every region. Regretfully, our belligerent

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 111. Tehran, Sept. 1, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
2. Ibid.



neighbours have despatched armies from four sides to Iranian soil ... The neutrality of Iran has not been respected. It is not tolerable any more for the Muslims of Iran, particularly the tribes. The Government policy of neutrality and the advice of the nation's leaders could deter to some extent the general fear and excitement which is due to Islamic relations and nationalism. The events of Khuy, Salmās, Astarābād; the invasion and assembling of the Russian forces in most of the north and east; the British force in the south; the violation by Turkish troops in the same part of Azarbaijan and in the south and west; what neutrality has been left for Iran? ... We begged our popular Government to pay attention to the crying out of our brothers and sisters in the north, south, east and west, to take a decision immediately and to inform the people of their duties before their patience is exhausted.

The Union of 'Ulamā'  
Shaykh Nūr Allāh and others. 1

In Isfahan, public tension was being aggravated day by day. The British Consul in the city believed that there was no imminent peril to the Allies' subjects, but the possibility was very strong that it would happen shortly afterwards. Therefore, the British and Russian Consuls asked for permission to despatch the women and children to Ahvaz.<sup>2</sup> The British Government disagreed with this suggestion because the evacuation of the whole Ispahan region by British and Russian subjects offered an opportunity to the Germans to take over completely.<sup>3</sup>

The British and Russian Consuls in Isfahan had been warned that a plot was on foot to assassinate them and the other Allied authorities in the city. On 2nd September, a gunman attacked the British Consul and his companion, an Indian savar. It happened at 5.45 a.m., when they were returning from a ride through the countryside; the gunman shot and wounded the consul and killed the Indian. The British and

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 90.

2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 279. Tehran, Aug. 26, 1915. Marling to Grey.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 315. Sept. 3, 1915. Marling to Grey.

Russian Consuls in Isfahan reported that "the situation (is) very disquieting"<sup>1</sup> and suggested that women and children should be deported before it was too late. They explained that the general agitation against the Allies was due to the British occupation of Bushire.<sup>2</sup> A broadsheet had been published, indicating that the "killing of consul is useless, and that all the British and Russians must be driven out."<sup>3</sup> Concerning the conditions in Isfahan, the British and Russian Ministers in Tehran were of the opinion that the Iranian Government would not be able to guarantee the safety of the Allies' subjects in Isfahan. There was also a strong possibility that the opposition might repeat their attempts; therefore, in spite of the fact that the withdrawal of the women and children would have some disadvantages for the Allies, particularly a drastic effect on the excitement in Shiraz, nevertheless both ministers agreed with the consuls' proposals.

The Isfahan incident suddenly overshadowed the other current problems in the country. "Bāmdād-i Raushan" commented on the event, blaming British policy in Iran and especially condemning the occupation of Bushire. The newspaper stated:

Mr. Graham was well informed of conditions in the city and (the inability) of the government's forces and also knew that the nationalistic and Islamic feeling is intensive in Isfahan; so it would have been better for him to leave showing off his power and stout-heartedness until another time. 4

The incident roused appeals from both legations in Tehran. They strongly protested to the Iranian Government that it had no intention

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 319. Tehran, Sept. 6, 1915. Marling to Grey.

4. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 85, Sept. 6, 1915/Shavvāl 15, 1333.



of maintaining the policy of neutrality, and warned the Iranian Government that if they did not receive some satisfactory measures, they would assume that the government showed without any doubt the possibility of relations being broken off between Iran and its neighbours.<sup>1</sup> On the day following the events in Isfahan, the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a meeting with the British Minister in Tehran, on behalf of the Iranian Government expressed regret for the attempt on the life of the consul-general at Isfahan. He also asked for financial assistance from both powers. The answer was that, unless the Iranian Government intended to take active measures to improve conditions, they should not expect to receive financial help. Mr. Marling interpreted the Iranian Government's policy as doing nothing to restrain the German proceedings or even to influence Iranian opinion against the Germans. On the contrary, the government's idea was to use the Germans as a lever to squeeze the two great powers for its own interests.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marling suggested a policy using pressure and considerable inducement to the Iranian Government in order to change its attitude. To achieve this purpose, he disagreed with the occupation of any other port in southern Iran, as had happened at Bushire, which would result in a pretext for stirring up Iranian sentiment against the British; but the pressure should be achieved by despatching a great number of Russian troops (15,000 men) to Iran, especially to Qazvin.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise there would be no alternative but to give the Iranian Government an ultimatum, as Mr. Marling reported:

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 313. Tehran, Sept. 2, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 316. Tehran, Sept. 4, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. Ibid.

... only course open to us would be to give Persia choice of declaring herself for or against us. It would be akin to asking her to break off relations with enemy powers ... if Persia wishes to join us she must declare war on those powers, ... In the contrary case, two Legations would leave the country, ... Persians would have forty-eight hours in which to decide. 1

He rather frankly expressed his anxiety and wrote:

Unless some very drastic measure is taken or a decisive military success occurs to shake Persia's belief in German invincibleness, we shall not be able to remain at Tehran very much longer, and it would at least be less damaging to our prestige to depart by our own doing than to be driven out. 2

The British Legation in Tehran foresaw that if the Iranian Government wished to join the Allies, it would certainly ask for military assistance, a sum of money and a guarantee of territorial integrity at the end of the war, also the gradual withdrawal of foreign forces from Iranian territory. But neither the Russian nor the British Governments intended to give the Iranian Government such privileges. As a matter of fact, much help to the Iranian Government was out of the question for both powers. The British Government also refused to give the Iranian Government an ultimatum which it believed would undoubtedly put Iran in the hands of the Germans. On the other hand, the Government of India recommended the policy of "holding up the situation."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Marling received a secret telegram which indicated the Allied, and especially the British, policy in Iran at that time. It was stated that: "we must emphatically deprecate ultimatum proposed by Minister, which would simply be playing German's

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 321. Tehran, Sept. 7, 1915. Marling to Grey.



game."<sup>1</sup> Then it explained that, in case the Iranian Government intended to join the Allies, they should be supported with substantial military force from both powers; otherwise they would not have the ability to prevent German activities; consequently, the consuls would be in greater danger than they were at the time. In addition to military aid, considerable financial assistance would be necessary too, not to mention the other privileges that they would desire. On the contrary, if the Iranian Government declared war against the Allies, of which they had shown no sign unless they were compelled, the British would have some difficulties:

- (1) Our consuls and communities would be in more precarious position than now.
- (2) We should be compelled either to abandon Anglo-Persian oil company's pipe line or to defend it at expense of operations in Mesopotamia.
- (3) Enormous political capital would be made by Turkey and Germany out of entry into war of second Muslem state against us. This would react inevitably on Afghanistan, where there is preponderately Shiah community, and on Muslem opinion in India, particularly Shiah. Amir's position would be rendered difficult, if not untenable -- and Muslem hostility now evidenced in sporadic attacks on North-West frontier would consolidate in possibly formidable dimensions. These are weighty considerations to which sufficient consideration does not appear to have been paid. 2

In the conclusion the Viceroy stated: "For these reasons we infinitely prefer for the present policy of drifting. Persian Government is probably too invertebrate to take definite line against us."<sup>3</sup> The Viceroy pointed out that:

It must not be forgotten that we have no troops to spare from either India or Mesopotamia and that presentation of an ultimatum to Persia may result in

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1. F.O. 371-2434. No. 912S. From Viceroy, Sept. 6, 1915.  
 2. Ibid.  
 3. Ibid.

intensifying Mohammedan hostility towards Allies, rendering the situation in India very critical and increasing our difficulties both on and outside our frontiers. 1

The Viceroy of India's Government hoped that the British forces in the Dardanelles would be successful and thus change their whole position in the war; therefore it would not be necessary "either (to) precipitate rupture with Persia or secure her partnership at a cost of money and embarrassing guarantees without compensating advantages of crushing German intrigues."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, all the legation's attempts failed to draw the British Government's attention to the importance of India and Afghanistan in relation to Iran's problems. Mr. Marling wrote: "I entirely fail to see how the policy of drift which Government of India advocate, can meet the difficulty."<sup>3</sup> He believed that the game was in the hands of the opposition. As he pointed out, "it is therefore not a question of drifting, but how long the Germans will hold their hands."<sup>4</sup> He tried to convince his government to change their policy towards Iran before it was too late. He recommended that it would be better for both powers to support the Iranian Government with financial and military aids, which they were constantly asking for. In return the Iranian Government would have to close the Majlis and suppress opposition newspapers. He urged his government that both powers should not miss the tendency of the Iranian Government towards the Allies, as he described:

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 321. Tehran, Sept. 7, 1915. Marling to Grey.

4. Ibid.



As matter of fact, the only element of the present situation in our favour is that the Persian Government will go to considerable length to prevent the two legations from leaving. 1

In fact the Germans were gaining power and influence day after day. All British and Russian efforts to improve conditions in their favour ended in disappointment; particularly the measures which both powers had taken up to that time in order to terrify the people and to squeeze the government resulted in resistance and agitation. "The Near East" commented on the failure of British policy in Iran:

If every British diplomacy is called upon to divide its activities into successes and failures there can be no doubt as to the category to which its efforts in Persia belong. Eight years ago Great Britain and Russia reminded one another and the world at large that Persia was of such particular interest to both of them that they regarded it as a duty imposed upon them to make themselves responsible for her welfare, and to allow no other country to interfere with their Persian preserves ... An inquiry into the situation in Persia today reveals the uncomfortable fact that the Turco-German combination has only had to raise its little finger in order to have things almost entirely its own way in that country. 2

The newspaper criticised the British Government in Iran during recent years. It was astonishing to the newspaper that the British had been disappointed in the result. It complained:

If Anglo-Russian dealings with Persia had lived up to the spirit of the Convention of 1907, it would have been impossible for the Germans to have suborned the Persians from a friendship of eight years in less than that number of months ... The fact is that, in spite of a traditional understanding between Persia and Great Britain, the attitude of British diplomacy during the last few years has resulted in complete estrangement of both people and Government. 3

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1. Ibid.
  2. "The Near East", Sept. 10, 1915.
  3. Ibid.

Mr. Marling anxiously reported that the situation would improve if they promised financial assistance and some other inducements; these would offer a chance "of pulling the chestnuts out of fire."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the fact that Mr. Marling doubted that Mustaufi ul-Mamalik would not dare to join the Allies against the Germans, and particularly against Turkey; nevertheless, they had to take the chance "wholly dependent on their good will."<sup>2</sup> Mr. MacLean in his report to Mr. Greenway wrote: "Until the war turns in our favour, the best we can hope for from Persia is to maintain some sort of sullen neutrality."<sup>3</sup>

### Shiraz

In Shiraz the condition was more serious than ever. There were several well-organised political groups acting for a national movement against the Allies. The 'ulamā' and the Democrat and Moderate Parties were also very active. The political groups and parties had close connections with the confederated khāns. There was no disagreement between the parties and the Governor-General of Fars. The gendarmerie officers were also in touch with the parties and were willing to take part in any necessary actions. Some newspapers, such as "Jām-i Jam", "Tāziyānah", "Ḥayyāt" and "'Adl", were published in Shiraz and circulated throughout the country, particularly in the south. These newspapers were extremely anti-Allied and inflamed the people's agitation; "Jām-i Jam" commented on the British action in the south of Iran:

So far as we can say with certainty, the English considered themselves not only the governor and ruler in the south, but the humble conduct and

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 321. Tehran, Sept. 7, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. Ibid.
  3. F.O. 371-2426. Tehran, Sept. 2, 1915. MacLean to Greenway.



slave-like action of the chiefs had given them such confidence that they considered themselves without trouble the owner of all the south. 1

The union and coordination of these political factors produced a national movement in the province and put Shiraz at the apex of the internal crisis of Iran. Most of the British propaganda in the south resulted in total failure. Major Trevor, the British Military Governor at Bushire, in continuation of taking strict measures against the hostile khāns, sent them letters of warning and threatened that they should avoid any hostile actions against the British forces in the south. One of the khāns who had had no differences with the British before, but nevertheless joined the confederation, was Shaykh Ḥusayn Chāhkūtā'ī from Chāhkūtā, a region near Bushire. The British Military Governor had confiscated the property and money of the hostile khāns in Bushire, among which were 10,000 tūmāns belonging to Shaykh Ḥusayn. In replying to the letter of the British Military Governor, Shaykh Ḥusayn wrote:

You have again threatened me with the confiscation of Tumans 10,000 ...

As regards the attack by volunteers on your troops of aggression to which you have made a reference, in the first place, personally I have not been on hostile terms with the British Government. Your barbarous actions and the torture, detention and deportation of innocent people of Bushire and your insult to our sacred country, the home of our ancestors, have compelled me to oppose, and fight with you, and life has hereby been rendered unhappy for myself, my family and my friends. Up to now we have not made any attack which may be worth notice in support of the cause of Islam. The false British civilisation has become plain to all nations of the world and their cruel and oppressive aggression in our country and territories have been made by the authorities of the illustrious Government. Fie on the civilised

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1. F.O. 371-2434. Enclosure No. 2. Supplement to the "Jām-i Jam", No. 18, 4 Ramazān 1333/27 July 1915.

Government of Great Britain and on the founders of learning and justice in the world! Your lies and fraud have become known to the world and they have awakened. Your barbarous steps against a few helpless and workless traders of Bushire are of no importance ... All the Muhammadans of the world, even all the nations of the world have become disgusted with you. If God wills, and by the grace and power of God, I will settle the affairs of Bushire in a space of two days ... 1

A war against the British was imminent. Day by day pro-British elements, such as some of the khāns and those who were well-known as friends of the British or working for them, were living in a panic.

The activities of the Moderate Party were more effective in Fars than in the other provinces. The highest committee of the party in Shiraz issued a broadsheet in order to neutralise the British propaganda and threatened those people who supported or worked for the Allies. It was published as an extra page in "Adl". The broadsheet contains short instructions about a human being's responsibilities for protecting his religion, homeland and society from foreign infringement; it then refers to the religious leaders:

According to the 'ulamā''s decision, nowadays it is obligatory and necessary for every Muslim who is able to prevent the British and Russians with their lives and properties. Any one who neglects these duties has rejected Muslim submission and it is lawful to shed his blood. 2

The committee had asked the 'ulamā' to declare their orders about people who help an enemy who has invaded an Islamic country. The 'ulamā''s reply was in the name of the six highest Shī'a mujtahids at

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1. F.O. 371-2435. Aug. 21, 1915. Dated Shavvāl 9, 1333. Subenclosure. From Shaikh Hussain Chahkutah to Major Trevor.
  2. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 104. 1333.



that time, such as Muḥammad Taqī Shīrāzī, Muḥammad Qāzīm Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Sharīf Isfahānī. The orders were to banish or possibly to hang anyone who had helped the enemy in any way.<sup>1</sup> In the cities the pro-British had no chance to take any action openly and tried not to be accused of doing so. Some khāns, such as Haydar Khān Ḥayyāt Dā'ūdī, remained pro-British in spite of Iranian sentiment. He received a lot of letters of advice, warning and threats from the khāns, 'ulamā', gendarmerie officers and even the Governor-General of Fars. The newspapers attacked him bitterly. Haydar Khān was Governor of the Bandar Rig region and he was able to prepare up to 3,000 savars, including his family savars. Therefore, he was encouraged, persuaded and threatened to join the confederated khāns. The letters which Haydar Khān received indicated the political excitement in the south and the pressure on pro-Allied people in Fars. Daryā Baygī, the title for the Governor or ports of the Persian Gulf, Dashtī and Dashtistān (the southern part of the province of Fars), wrote to Haydar Khān:

I do not know by the deceit of what devil you have lost your senses and obtained a bad name for yourself in Persia. As I hold a high opinion of your sense, I write plainly to ask you whether you are ready, in return for your evil actions in the past, to give the hands of unity to your brethren in religion, and check the unbelievers who have invaded our country, or whether you prefer disgrace? 2

Shaykh Ja'far, one of the Shiraz 'ulamā', who arrive in Burazjān from Shiraz in order to assist the anti-British movement in the south, wrote to Haydar Khān:

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1. The broadsheet contains another proclamation of Mīrzā Āqā, a mujtahid in Fars.
  2. F.O. 371-2436. Enclosure No. 2. Dated Shawwal 20, 1333/Sept. 2, 1915. From the Darya Begi to Haidar Khan, Hayat Daud.

In accordance with my duty to the Shara'... I wrote to inform you that it is incumbent on all Muhammadians and especially the occupants of the frontiers to take steps without hesitation and to give their lives and properties in order to ward off the unbelievers and remove their cruel hands from Bushire and to stop their intrigues and deceit in Muhammadan lands, and their rule over Muhammadans. If anyone fails to follow this Divine order, it is obligatory on all who can to compel him to obedience to Divine orders ...

It is obvious that after receipt of this letter you will have no excuse to make and in view of my good opinion of your devotion to Islam and devoutness, I trust that you will acclaim this Divine invitation ... 1

The main reasons for the occupation of Bushire by British forces were guarding the oil wells and the pipe line and protecting the British Army in Mesopotamia from the east. From the Iranian Government's point of view the occupation of Bushire had had no effect but to increase the government problems drastically and to grant the pro-Germans' criticism of the government, that following the policy of neutrality was useless.

However, there had frequently been collisions between the British forces and some of the followers of the hostile khāns whose regions were close to Bushire. Four British warships in the Persian Gulf had bombarded the hostile khāns' villages, destroyed houses and landed troops. Some conflicts were inevitable. There had occurred intensive fighting between the British force and the khāns' men. The fighting sometimes was so close that the British troops had to use bayonets. According to the British War Office, the British force lost 150 men in the two operations of Bushire and Dilvar.<sup>2</sup> Ra'is 'Alī Dilvārī was killed in one of these combats. The news of his death was followed

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1. F.O. 371-2436. Enclosure No. 4. Dated Ziḡa'adeh 10, 1333/Sept. 21, 1915. From Shaikh Jaffar of Shiraz, Borazjun to Haidar Khan of Hayat Daud, Bandar Rig.
  2. Christopher Sykes, Wassmuss, the German Lawrence (London, 1936), 109.



by a wave of anger in the south. In the cities mourning ceremonies were performed and Ra'īs 'Alī was highly praised and called a martyr.

In Shiraz the people's irritation was tremendously inflamed. The Iranian Government received a protest that it was doing nothing. A vā'iz in a Shiraz mosque said about the central government:

Sometimes my friends come to me asking if the Dowlat (Government) in Tehran hath declared neutrality how can we go about with arms? only from such speeches I learn that there is a Dowlat in Tehran. O Ye fools! the Dowlat of Persia is but a name or the Persians would not burn under the Russian and the Anglees. The Ministers pass their days in trembling and they nearly suffocate with fright. That is how they govern in Tehran! Can you imagine these few wretches as the leaders of our people. 1

A military force was composed from volunteers of the people in Shiraz. All classes of society, even the 'ulamā', took a part in the force; called the "National Army", they were training under the gendarmerie officers in Shiraz. The purpose of this action was to join the confederation for a great attack. On 7th September 1915, Ghulām 'Alī Khān, an Iranian who worked as the British Consul's assistant in Shiraz, was attacked by a gunman and wounded twice; he died the next day. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, the Governor-General of Fars at that time, stated that Ghulām 'Alī Khān used to pass a district where ruffians came to gather. On the day of the incident, Ghulām 'Alī Khān was passing by as usual and loudly said, "'Alī Dilvārī went to Hell"; he was followed by one of the ruffians, shot and later on died.<sup>2</sup>

Mukhbir us-Saltānah, the Governor-General of Fars, had been blamed by the British Consul at Shiraz as a pro-German. The British Government

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1. Ibid., 112-13.

2. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 275.

rapidly requested his dismissal from the governorship. His recall from Shiraz was the first condition of the British demands to the Iranian Government for settling the Bushire problem. Mukhbir us-Saltānah claimed he had done his best to maintain neutrality, to decrease the people's agitation and to deter the people from making serious attempts against British subjects in Shiraz. He stated that he had deterred the Democrats from kidnapping the British Consul in Shiraz. He had told the Democrat representative that "the consul is under government protection and it is my duty to protect him"; when the Democrat insisted on the matter, he replied that "I am bound to stay at the gate of the consulate; (first) you must kill me and (then) enter."<sup>1</sup>

The British Legation in Tehran, in a letter to the Iranian Government, wrote that they were assured that the Governor-General of Fars had been a leader of the Democrats and a center of hostile activities against British interests in Fars. They asked for his recall from Shiraz. Mukhbir us-Saltānah denied the charges and professed that he would have left Shiraz willingly even without the governor's permission if it were not for the peril of disturbances with which he would later be blamed. Mukhbir us-Saltānah referred to his relations with the Democrats and confessed that he had no alternative but to come to terms with them as they had public support. That was the only way he was able to prevent them from serious attempts. He added that "it is not my fault that the Democrats have paid no attention to the British pound and Indian star."<sup>2</sup> About his political opinion, Mukhbir us-Saltānah said: "I am an Iranian and support my nation's interest. I do not

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1. Ibid., 271

2. Ibid., 276.



German, British or Russian. If I will be obliged to do anything against my nation, I will resign."<sup>1</sup>

When he was vehemently criticised by the British Legation in Tehran that he had no intention of maintaining neutrality and would not prevent the people demonstrating against the British, he wrote: "If the meaning of neutrality is to oblige the people not to talk for defending their rights, I am not able to do it; if such action is possible, why will the government in Tehran not do that?"<sup>2</sup> However, Mukhbir us-Saltānah stated his sincere opinion not in his book but in a letter to Ismā'il Khān of Shabānkārah.

... you should, by the grace of God, be engaged in safeguarding your own borders ... you should of course think well and not lose your reputation at the end of life with the nation and the Government, it is still the duty of the zealous chiefs of the tribes to check with all their might the aggressions of foreigners on the clean soil of Persia.

At present by this unrighteous action on the part of British military authorities, neutrality had been violated. Whatever complaints they may have had, it was not expedient to pull down the Persian flag at Bushire and seize the Government Departments.

As far as the matter of Bushire is concerned the Government will carry on negotiations with a view to maintaining as far as possible the former relations, but if they wish to overstep the borders of others, it will be your duty as a Muhammadan to check them and defend the national right. 3

In another letter to Haydar Khān Ḥayyāt Dā'ūdī, Mukhbir us-Saltānah tried to encourage him to join the confederation:

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1. Ibid., 278.

2. Ibid., 279.

3. F.O. 371-2436. Sub-enclosure No. 1. Aug. 17, 1915. Tele. dated Shawwal 5. From Governor-General of Fars, Shiraz to Ismail Khan of Shabankareh (through Abu Tailb Khan, Gendarmerie officer, Borasjun).

It is a cause for regret that such a man as you should become known among the people as a seller of your country and be cursed by them to the end of eternity ... It is the duty of men like you, who are a Muhammadan and Persian, in safeguarding neutrality not to allow foreigners to encroach on your country.

Although the neutrality has already been violated by the measures of the British military and the Government has begun diplomatic negotiations with regard to the occurrence at Bushire with a view to maintaining the former relations yet if they want to make aggressions in other places, your duty is to check them and defend national and Islamic rights. 1

The Iranian Government had gradually been losing its control over those cities which were apparently governed by government authorities. The Shiraz incident indicated that the people would not tolerate the government's policy of neutrality any longer. The government received a lot of telegrams and letters from the cities demanding immediate action; otherwise the people would act as they believed they should. A telegram from Kashan to the government, Majlis, and newspapers described the people's attitude towards the situation in the country:

The violation of our northern and southern neighbours have been increased since the beginning of the war ... According to the orders of religious leaders ... it is necessary and obligatory to defend and check them from Islamic countries ... but thence the government was of the idea that the safety of Iran depended upon maintaining neutrality ... we obeyed the government's decision and kept silent.

It seems that the foreigners considered our silence as evidence for our disobedience to the religious leaders, and (assumed) our assent to their violation ... Do we have still to be in idleness? Do we have to see the foreigners' domination in our home? ... For God's sake we are not able to stand any more ... and we are not going to accept any more false promises. 2

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1. F.O. 371-2436. Sub-enclosure No. 2. Aug. 17, 1915. Tele. dated Shawwal 5 (17th August 1915). From the Mukbir-us-Saltanah, Governor-General of Fars to Haidar Khan of Hayat Daoud, Bandar Rig (through sultan Abu Talib Khan).
  2. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 86, Sept. 8, 1915/Shavvāl 27, 1333.



The Iranian Foreign Office's envoy in Shiraz reported that the crisis in the city was getting worse. He believed it was better for the Iranian Government to reach an agreement for the evacuation of Bushire as soon as possible. He regarded that there were terrifying rumours around, and incidents such as Ghulām 'Alī Khān's assassination. If things continued as they were, the authorities would be involved in big trouble.<sup>1</sup>

Āqā Mīrzā, the mujtahid of Shiraz, had received a message from the government in which the British Minister in Tehran had complained about his activities, such as the issue of his proclamation. He was asked to co-operate with the government. Āqā Mīrzā was surprised that the government had not appreciated his efforts and stated:

If I did not advise and prevent the people who are extremely excited by the ports' incidents, Shiraz would have been on fire by now. Now I have also convinced the people to wait for the result of the government's endeavours and I deter them from taking any actions. It is better for the government not to delay in obtaining the outcome of its actions, not to leave the people in a state of idleness. The British Minister's complaint about me is based on the information of the British Consul at Shiraz. The reason for the complaint in fact is my disagreement with their desires and expectations of me ... to receive money from the British for the gendarmerie and to be their propagandist, which I am not able to be ... 2

Āqā Mīrzā referred then to the proclamation and stated that it was his religious duty to answer the question.

The Shiraz incident offered the Tehran newspapers another opportunity to attack the Allies', and especially the British, policy in Iran. "Naubahār", in a comment on the assassination of Ghulām 'Alī

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 31, No. 127. 1333. Letter dated Shavvāl 30, 1333. No. 2067.

2. Ibid.

Khān, stated that it was annoying and called the incident a "political murder". The writer believed that British operations in the south was the main reason for the Shiraz occurrence. The newspaper did not blame the people of Shiraz but held the British responsible for the event and wrote:

Nowadays affairs are dependent on the sword; if one day the affairs are settled by talk and proof, we will have proved that the British are sinful ... Whatever the Iranian politicians expected from the Russians in the north, the British committed it in the south and involved us in great danger. 1

In another edition, "Naubahār" criticised Sir Edward Grey for his Middle East policy, referred to the British policy in Iran and stated that although the foundation of British policy in Iran did not have any differences from that of Russia, the British Government's tactics and activities were at least unknown to public acknowledgement; therefore it seemed a mild policy and was not as harsh as the Russian. Recently the tactic had changed and British representatives in Iran, particularly Sir Charles Marling, had approved this policy and was responsible for this change. The writer referred to "The Near East" article and believed the British Parliament and public opinion disagreed with this sort of policy.<sup>2</sup>

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" referred to the turmoil in the country and believed that the neighbours of Iran did not indeed want to let Iran develop. They used the ignorance of the people and traitors for their purposes. The writer then reverted to the past and pointed out some examples to prove his idea. He wrote:

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1. "Naubahār", No. 73, Sept. 10, 1915/Shavvāl 29, 1333.
  2. Ibid., No. 72, Sept. 7, 1915/Shavvāl 26, 1915.



If the Iranian Government enacted new taxation or collected revenue in order to overcome its financial problems, something happened and cost a great deal of money; consequently, the government became poorer and more indigent. If the government employed foreign financial experts or military advisers, these would cause irritation and suspicion. They protect those who avoided paying tax and supported the rebels. 1

The writer intended to show his main point, that the European policy of colonisation had set up internal discords, civil wars and disagreement in Iran. He referred them to the condition in the southern part of Iran and attacked the British policy which was believed to be a great error:

Threatening has recently been the policy of the British Government in order to subjugate us and if they could to drag us into a war against Turkey; in case this is not possible, at least they desire to be free in their activities in Iran and to arrest their hostile subjects in the country. 2

"Shūrā" believed that the occupation of Bushire by the British forces and their oppressive actions had produced armed agitation in the south; this reaction had gradually spread all over the country and created strong hatred in Iranian hearts against the British. The newspaper stated:

We have always been firmly of the idea that the British harm to Iran is not less than the Russian, but the London Diplomatic court had constantly chosen a hypocritical policy to delude the simple-minded Iranian.

On one hand they had taken part with the Russians in offending and violating (Iran). On the other hand ... (they) showed a friendly attitude towards Iran, while most of the Russian unrighteous actions were due to British instruction and inducement.

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 83, Sept. 6, 1915/Shavvāl 25, 1333.
  2. Ibid.

If we are not forgetful, we will remember that the first chant about the unfortunate convention of 1907, which must be considered as the foundation of our present misfortune, came out from the London Diplomat's mouth ...

Now our unkind neighbours ... do not allow us to cure our wounds, which are the result of their brutality; they are cruelly cutting off our arteries of independence and integrity ... if they kill us eventually, why do we not die with honour? 1

The British and Russians newspapers inveighed simultaneously against the Iranian Government, Majlis and 'ulamā', which had been dominated by German and Turkish influence. The Iranian Ambassador in Petrograd complained about the Russian newspapers' attitude towards Iran, which had misinterpreted the country's affairs and published inaccurate news. He asked for permission to deny the report in "Novoye Vremya", which stated:

The Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs had gone to the British Legation to express his regret about the consul's incident (in Isfahan). The British Minister did not receive him and sent a message in which (he stated that) it was useless to receive an official statement of regret from a government which was not able to secure the safety of the British diplomatic representatives. 2

On 6th September "Novoye Vremya" published an article about Iranian matters. The writer surveyed Iran's condition from the beginning of the war, stating that Sultān Aḥmad Shāh, his government and the Majlis had agreed to announce the neutrality of Iran in the war; they had no alternative but to be neutral due to a lack of army and naval forces. In the second year of the war, the situation in Iran had

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1. "Shūrā", No. 90, Sept. 2, 1915/Shavvāl 21, 1333.
  2. I.F.O., C. 62, f. 4, No. 12. 1333 H.Q. Dated Shavvāl 30, 1333. No. 2073.



changed and the Iranian Government was not able to maintain neutrality.

He added his point of view about the neutrality of Iran:

Neutrality is maintained only in those parts where the Russian and British forces have occupied and the forces have deterred the Turk and German's intrigues and prevented the court and government's administration to be dragged under the influence of the intriguers completely. 1

The writer believed that there was no sign of official neutrality from the government in the central and southern parts of Iran and referred to many incidents, such as the fights between the gendarmerie and Lürs and also with the Shāhsavān, the Kangāvar conflict, the Isfahan incident and so on. He alluded to the 'ulamā''s movement and leadership, that they had raised the flag of jihād with German money and arms, organised some groups for war against Islam's enemy and had asked for help from the Prophet and "Haji Wilhelm". The writer expressed his pity for the situation of Iran and prophesied that the German and Turkish influence in Iran would cause the division of that unfortunate country, but he did not mention by whom it would be divided. He also attacked the Iranian Government, which had allowed its administration to be dragged under German and Turkish influence and to follow a harmful policy for the country. He foresaw that in this case the country would be more and more involved in calamity. In his conclusion he anticipated that the threat and hostility which had been manifested to the Russians and British would come to act and warned his government to be aware of the Iranian situation.<sup>2</sup>

"Horizont", published in Badkubah, stated that the political condition of Iran was gradually getting worse. The Iranian crisis had

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 10, No. 69.

2. Ibid.

been continuing for a long time, which was due to the cabinet crisis, the effect of the world war and, worst of all, the German propaganda and the Iranians who were pro-German, which misled public opinion to be against the British and Russians. The people's agitation was increasing every moment. The Germans were pouring money into the country and organising secret armed groups.<sup>1</sup>

The British newspapers had their own point of view. "The Times" blamed the Germans for causing problems in Iran:

... the untiring activity of German agents in Persia and their repeated attempts to cause embarrassment to Great Britain and Russia by stirring up trouble. Here, as elsewhere, they have shown themselves utterly unscrupulous in their methods, one, a certain Dr. Pugin, having even gone as far as pretending to have embraced the Mahamdan religion in order to move easily to influence Persians. 2

On 7th September, "The Times" not only attacked German activities in Iran but also blamed the Iranian Government for their inability to deter the German agents' actions in the country. The writer believed that the German agents had been spending money lavishly and their legation in Tehran and consulate in Isfahan were armed camps. He stated:

A section of Majliss corrupted by German gold frustrates the efforts of any cabinet attempting to maintain neutrality ... The Persian masses fail to realise how the peace and neutrality they ardently desire is being jeopardised. 3

"The Near East"'s commentary on Iranian affairs referred to the attempt on the consul-general's life in Isfahan, then to the crisis in

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1. "Horizont", quoted in "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 84, Sept. 4, 1915/Shavvāl 23, 1333.
  2. "The Times", Aug. 28, 1915.
  3. Ibid., Sept. 7, 1915.



the country. The writer criticised the British Government, which had done little for the safety of British subjects in Iran, and stated:

British prestige has suffered too much already from our failure to exact respect for the lives of British subjects. It is impossible that latest outrages pass unnoticed. The time may not be opportune for dealing with the Persian question as a whole, but more will be expected of the British Government than landing of a small force at Bushire. 1

The German newspapers looked at Iranian affairs from another angle, which caused a lot of embarrassment for the British and Russians. The "Berliner Tageblatt", about the conflicts between Iranian national forces and the British in the south, wrote:

The determination about which the Persian statesmen seem to have agreed is a great one. The fight is a fight for the existence and independence of the country, rather for the recovery of the independence which has been lost during the Anglo-Russian efforts for the restoration of order in the country. The business for Persia is now to wipe out of existence the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 and all its consequences. The agreement was made without consulting the country, and the Persian Government has always protested against it. But beyond this platonic protest nothing was done. 2

"Frankfurter Zeitung" referred to the situation in the south of Iran and the Iranian reaction against the occupation of the ports by 3,000 men of the British force. The writer stated:

The excitement in Southern Persia is great. Preparations are being made for resistance on a large scale in the event of the English advancing from the coast region. The principal tribes of Southern Persia have agreed to proclaim a Holy war. 3

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1. "The Near East", Sept. 17, 1915.
  2. "Berliner Tageblatt", quoted in "The Times", Aug. 26, 1915.
  3. "Frankfurter Zeitung", quoted in "The Times", Aug. 26, 1915.

In Iran, the editor of "‘Asr-i Jadīd", in a letter to the German Ambassador, had asked some questions relating to current events in Iran, both questions and answers being published in the issue of 7th September. The ambassador tried to show the German goodwill in Iran. He stated that the Germans had endeavoured to avoid any collisions with the British and Russians in Iran in order to prevent the country being engaged in the war. The ambassador referred then to the British and Russians, who had no intention of having the same attitude as the Germans. He referred to some incidents in which the Russians and British had been rude and maltreated German subjects in a neutral country. He mentioned the closing down of the German orphanage in Tabriz and other incidents in this city, the arrest of consuls and the death of a German woman in Urūmiyah and so on. The ambassador stated that their enemy without hesitation took any attempts, even mean ones, to make impossible the arrival or residence of German subjects in Iranian cities. The German Government had considered this savage behaviour and taken necessary measures. The ambassador expressed his opinion about Iranian policy and admitted that it would be better for the Iranian Government to follow neutrality, asking the Russians and British to withdraw their forces from Iranian territory and to let the German Consuls take their posts. Regarding the southern part of Iran, the German Ambassador stated that the Turkish Government had officially assured him that they had no intention of occupying Iranian territory. Had the British, who claimed that they had been a friend of Iran, offered the same assurance? The editor had asked what kind of assistance the Germans were able to give the Iranian Government in order to help to drive the enemy out of Iran, but the ambassador avoided commenting on that.<sup>1</sup>

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1. "‘Asr-i Jadīd", No. 63, Sept. 7, 1915/Shavvāl 26, 1333.



A Solution to the Bushire Problem

The gravity of the situation in the country and the serious threat to the Allies' interests and subjects forced the Iranian Government on one hand to appeal for financial assistance from the Allies and on the other hand to put them under pressure to stop their harshness and to come to terms with the Iranian Government; therefore, the government informed the British Minister in Tehran that the British demands for settling the Bushire problem had been rejected.

On 7th September, the Russians landed 1,000 men at Anzalī and the day after, 1,200 more. The landing of the Russian force was followed by two rumours, first, a large number of Russian forces were due to come soon; secondly, the Allies intended to bring back Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh, this time supported by a British force from the south of Iran. Mr. Marling reported "Rumours that a considerable force is about to arrive have shaken German supporters considerably."<sup>1</sup> He expressed also his anxiety that if the Russian force was not increased it would have a drastic result.

"Naubahār" wrote that "The Russians are coming to force the Iranian Government to come to their terms."<sup>2</sup> On one hand, the prospect of the war had changed in favour of the Allies in the Middle East. The British force in Mesopotamia had advanced towards the north and was preparing to approach Baghdad. The fear of the fall of Baghdad, the landing of the Russian force in the north of Iran and the intensity of disturbances in the country caused the Iranian Government to panic and turn once more to the Allies. On the other hand, the agitation in central and southern Iran had created intolerable conditions for

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 332. Tehran, Sept. 11, 1915.

2. "Naubahār", No. 73, Sept. 10, 1915/Shavvāl 29, 1333.

the Allies' subjects. The British and Russian residences in Isfahan had left the city and there was a strong probability that the Russian and British Consuls personally would leave the city soon afterwards. There was a saying around in Tehran that the British and Russian Ministers also intended to leave the capital for Qazvin. The British and Russian Governments realised that they must take action and ease their policy in Iran. They were unable to despatch a considerable force to take control and the country was on the edge of war. Both governments were worried about the continuation of disturbances in Iran, especially the British Government; it sought a way for the safety of British subjects in the cities. Therefore, Mr. Marling was ordered to negotiate with the Iranian Government, asking if the government had any intention of protecting British Consuls, officers, and subjects in Iran. The legation had instructions to warn the Iranian Government: "If two Legations were once withdrawn, probable result might be that the two powers would never again be represented in Persia by two diplomatic missions accredited to an independent and neutral court."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Marling was also authorised to explain the British Government's willingness to ease the financial problems of Iran by granting a moratorium from that time until six months after the end of the war. The British Government was ready to pay a subsidy at the rate of £50,000 per month during the war so long as the Iranian Government's attitude was satisfactory. Sir Edward Grey recommended to Marling that if it was absolutely imperative he might increase the offer up to a maximum of £100,000 per month.<sup>2</sup> In a meeting with Mustaufi ul-Mamālik, Mr. Marling received the Iranian Government's proposals, as he reported:

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 262. F.O., Sept. 9, 1915.

2. Ibid.



The Governor-General of Fars is to be removed at once and Kawam appointed as Acting Governor. Kawam is to select a suitable person to act as Governor of Bushire; Persian Government will inform me of name of person selected, and I am to transmit it to military authorities at Bushire, who will then hand over administration to him and allow Persian flag to be hoisted.

Troops to remain as long as required in order to ensure safety of consulate and community.

Persian Government undertake to punish guilty Khans and to endeavour to put an end to German intrigues, but hope we shall not insist on excessive severity of former point. 1

Regarding the last part of the proposal, Mr. Marling informed the Iranian Government that because it would take time to punish the khāns and to prevent German intrigues, the British Government agreed to give them the necessary time.<sup>2</sup>

The news of the agreement between the Iranian Government and the British produced a strong protest from the anti-Allied societies. The newspapers inveighed against the government for its weakness. "Shihāb-i Sāqib" believed:

Had the breaking off of relations between Iran and Britain had one harm for Iran, it would have had thousands of dangers for the British. Our capital will not be in danger from 2000 men but 30,000 troops and auxiliary forces in Baluchistan at India's gate will create a threat to end the British reign in India forever. 3

The writer urged the government to decide and act without fear and hesitation and also to recognise whether the benefit to the country was in neutrality or partiality. In the case of the latter, which one

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 328. Tehran, Sept. 8, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 31, No. 146. 1333 H.Q. Dated Sept. 10, 1915. Marling to Iranian F.O.
  3. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 85, Sept. 13, 1915/Ẓī Qi'dah 7, 1333.

would assist Iran more and accept less? He encouraged the government to resist and avoid acting without a clear prospect.

The recalling of Mukhbir us-Saltānah to the capital and the appointment of Qavām ul-Mulk, caused the people of Shiraz to protest against the government decision. I'tilāfiyūn Tauḥīdiyūn (Coalition of Monotheists) sent a telegram to the Prime Minister and Majlis deputies: "The nation and political parties disagree with the change of governor. It is proved to them that this change is tantamount to handing the south over to foreign possession."<sup>1</sup>

"Bāmdād-i Raushan" believed that most difficulties in foreign relations of Iran at the time was the Fars problem and the unreasonableness of the British. The writer continued that the British demands were not acceptable to any Iranian. He expressed his regret for the discharging of Mukhbir us-Saltānah and appointment of Qavām ul-Mulk, whose bad record, recommendation and support by the British, were proof that he was not suitable for the post.<sup>2</sup>

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" was against the agreement between the Iranian Government and the British; it believed it was a big mistake and that the Iranian Government had been defrauded. The writer stated that the British had done their utmost to put an end to their problems in the south. They realised that the Mujāhidīn were determined to attack the British force which had been under pressure constantly and had no alternative but to withdraw. The inclination of the Iranian Government granted the opportunity to negotiate with them and take advantage of the time. The writer criticised the government for the discharging of

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1. Sipīhr, 209.

2. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 90, Sept. 18, 1915/Ẓī Qī'dah 7, 1333.



Mukhbir us-Saltānah, who had done his best to handle the Fars administration. He warned the government not to trust in the British, who would not keep their promises.<sup>1</sup>

On 14th September, Mustaufī ul-Mamālik despatched a telegram to Mukhbir us-Saltānah to a vital position in Tehran and authorised him to hand over the governorship to anyone whom he wished. Mukhbir us-Saltānah introduced Qavām ul-Mulk as his successor.<sup>2</sup> This was a great relief to the British in the south and very satisfactory for the British Legation in Tehran. Mr. Marling realised that it was time for the British to act and in a report to his government expressed his idea that "It would ... be politic now to allow Persian flag to be replaced at Bushire, as its removal has caused more irritation than the occupation, and to rehoist it would take some of the sting out of the German agitation, particularly at Shiraz."<sup>3</sup> But he pointed out that the flag should not be replaced until the appointment of the new Governor of Bushire was agreed on by the Iranian Government and the British Legation in Tehran. There were a series of negotiations about the selection of a governor for Bushire. In spite of the fact that Qavām ul-Mulk appointed his nephew as Governor of Bushire, who was well-known as pro-British and "promises to work in harmony with Resident-General"<sup>4</sup>, the British requested that he should not be escorted with many savars. However, on 16th October, the Governor arrived in Bushire and the Persian flag was raised respectfully, but the British force remained in their positions.

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 88, Sept. 23, 1915/Ẓī ʿi ʿdah 12, 1333.

2. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 282.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 372. Tehran, Sept. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.

4. F.O. 371-2436. Tele. p. No. 2045. Sept. 18, 1915. Cox to India.

The Moratorium

The question of financial assistance from the British and Russian Governments to the Iranian Government had been discussed between the Iranian Government and the British and Russian Ministers in Tehran since the commencement of the war, particularly during 'Ayn ud-Daulah's premiership. It was due to the general political condition of Iran, which was growing in favour of the Germans and Turks and against the British and Russians. The attitude of the Iranian people against the Allies attracted the attention of both powers, particularly the British, for "Turco-German intrigue and Moslem fanaticism are threatening to undermine the influence of His Majesty's Government and the Russian Government in the country."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, both governments decided to assist 'Ayn ud-Daulah in order to enable him to hinder German and Turkish influence in Iran. The negotiations between the Allied Ministers and 'Ayn ud-Daulah's cabinet began with the object of concluding an agreement. Due to the bankruptcy and hopelessness of the Iranian Government, the British and Russian Governments were only willing to assist the Iranian Government financially and then only enough to keep the government in power, in order to follow a policy in favour of the Allies. Concerning the power of the Majlis, 'Ayn ud-Daulah presented Mushīr ud-Daulah's programme with some modifications to the benefit of the Allies. Mushīr ud-Daulah's programme had earlier been totally refused by both powers. 'Ayn ud-Daulah's proposals at first consisted of the withdrawal of Russian forces from Iranian territory and a moratorium; later on it was reduced to only financial assistance as a moratorium for three years. The word moratorium, from

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1. F.O. 371-2428. F.O., July 2, 1915. Secretary to the Treasury.



the Iranian point of view, meant that, due to the war and Iran's crisis, the British and Russian Governments would allow the Iranian Government not to pay instalments and interest on British and Russian loans from the beginning of the war until a peace treaty was signed. In spite of the importance of Iran's situation in the war, both powers' ministers in Tehran finally concluded that financial assistance was the only aid which both powers were willing to give the Iranian Government in return for their demands. They believed the best method for offering financial assistance was "some modification of the scheme of a moratorium in connexion with the foreign loans and advances received by the Persian Government."<sup>1</sup> They concluded that this plan would have two advantages, first from the Iranian Government's point of view, it would not be considered a new loan, and consequently would not need the Majlis's approval. Secondly, the British and Russians would be able to "afford assistance by means of monthly advance while retaining in their own hand the necessary term."<sup>2</sup> The British Government advocated the ministers' proposal, but the Russians haggled over the matter and simultaneously 'Ayn ud-Daulah's cabinet resigned.

In the middle of September 1915, the Iranian Government had a better chance of dealing with both powers, but the internal crisis of the country had bent the government to its knees and thus it was unable to take the opportunity. Therefore, the government imploringly requested financial assistance and stated that they would do their utmost to protect the consul and put an end to German propaganda. The negotiations between the Iranian Government and the legations, and communications between both powers and their legations in Tehran

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 371-2428. F.O., June 29, 1915. to Imperial Bank of Persia.

about the provisos of financial assistance had begun. Mr. Marling did not agree with offering the Iranian Government so large a sum of money all at once, and preferred to offer a moratorium with respect to southern customs receipts, about £10,000 monthly, and to "keep plenty in hand to meet their inevitable demands for more."<sup>1</sup> He also suggested that:

I would also urge, as His Majesty's Government contemplate an expenditure ... 50,000 l, that I should be empowered to employ part of all the difference between this sum and subvention which should be at any moment granted to Persian Government for secret service purposes. I could use it more directly in our interests and with more effect than the present Cabinet. 2

However, the Iranian Government suggested their proposals as follows: "1) A Moratorium or its equivalent to equal about 200,000 tomans per month, as from 1st January last to the end of the war; 2) 10,000 rifles with ammunition ..."<sup>3</sup> In fact these suggestions were what the British Government desired without asking for, and the amount of money was much less than the British were prepared to pay. Mr. Marling pointed out:

It must not be expected that Persian Government will be able to do much against the Germans, but moral effect produced by the fact the Cabinet, which owes its existence to pro-German influences, has had to appeal to the Powers to assist them to counteract German campaign might be considerable. It would discourage German supporters and encourage our friends, on which hitherto dubious attitude of the Government has had a very chilling effect.

These are not very large results to look forward to, but the combination appears to me to hold out some chance of staving off the possibility of rupture

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 333. Tehran, Sept. 11, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
 2. Ibid.  
 3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 340. Tehran, Sept. 15, 1915. Marling to Grey.



of relations for a time. Time is of great importance, and even if Russian Government were to decline to join in arrangement, I would urge that I may concede at least the monthly subvention in the form of a moratorium in the name of the two powers. 1

However, the Russian Government also remarked that they agreed with financial assistance in principle and indicated that the sums which the Iranian Government received should bear interest. The British and Russian Governments refused to agree to military aid. Under those circumstances, the British Government in fact did not agree to help Iran with armaments; not only was it difficult to obtain and send such assistance to Iran, they were afraid of the possibility that their support would be used against them. Therefore, financial assistance was the only help which the Iranian Government could receive from both powers. After some verbal communication between the two sides of the convention and haggling about the date of the retroactive effect of suspension (the Iranian Government wished it to begin from 8th January 1915, the two legations from 8th March 1915), on 25th September 1915, the Iranian Government received a letter from both legations:

With reference to interview which took place on 15th September between Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and British and Russian Ministers on the subject of suspension of service of British and Russian loans and advances, His Britannic Majesty's Legation has the honour to inform the Persian Government that its request for suspension of these services from 8th March until one month after conclusion of peace had been received with benevolence by British and Russian Governments, who agree that for period above indicated registered customs receipts affected to respective services be repaid to Persian Government, but with condition that total monthly sums accruing to it do not exceed 30,000l.

As regards sums resulting from retroactive effect of present arrangement, it is understood that as

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1. Ibid.

financial considerations prevent immediate payment thereof, they will be placed at the disposal of Persian Government when that is feasible.

Imperial Bank of Persia is authorised by the two Governments to come to an understanding with Persian Government for execution of present agreement, as well as for eventual liquidation of suspended services. Contracting parties reserve right to terminate this agreement by a simple declaration to the effect. 1

Another note was enclosed with the above letter in which both ministers indicated that the British and Russians' purpose in supporting the Iranian Government was to enable the government "to take measures to suppress foreign intrigues."<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, Mr. Marling believed that the suspension which the Iranian Government wished to get under the name of a moratorium was indeed nothing but a monthly allowance from both governments; in this case the Iranian Government was allowed to agree to the convention without submitting it to the Majlis. However, this arrangement faced difficulties from both parties. The use of the word "moratorium" and suspension of "service" had produced the impression in Petrograd that the operation was a very complicated one. On 10th October 1915, the Russian Minister in Tehran received instructions to agree with the arrangement, but he was directed to omit the passage referring to the Imperial Bank of Persia and to insert the following at the end of the preceding paragraph: "Under the form of a new advance and on the same conditions as regards rate of interest as preceding advance."<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 364. Tehran, Sept. 25, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 363. Tehran, Sept. 25, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 392. Tehran, Oct. 12, 1915. Marling to Grey.



Both legations were astonished by the Russian instruction because the passage indicated by using the words "new advance" that it would be considered as a new loan, which inevitably should be approved by the Majlis, and there was no hope for the Majlis' sanction. In spite of the fact that the Russian Minister in Tehran described clearly the formula which both legations inserted in the notice, and which would enable them through the Imperial Bank of Persia to insist on any reasonable conditions that might be desired, the Russian Government took a lot of time to agree with the proposal. On the other hand, the Iranian Government raised objections to the last paragraph in the notice, which reserved for both parties the right to terminate the arrangement at any moment; the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs believed that it was "difficult for the Government to accept the accommodation as purport of paragraph was so palpably one-sided."<sup>1</sup> The Iranian Government's objection was undesirable to both legations. They wanted to control the continuation of the subvention only so long as the Iranian Government made use of it in their interests. These various delays, however, had kept the Iranian Government without money for weeks; so they could not take any measures to counter German propaganda among the people; on the contrary it offered the best opportunities to the Germans to stir up the general sentiments incredibly.

#### The Occupation of the Turkish Consulate at Rasht

Meanwhile, the country was subject to crises, which occurred one after the other. In the north, at Rasht, on Wednesday, 22nd September, the Russian force attacked the Turkish Consulate and arrested Taufiq Bayg, the Turkish Consul, and his staff, occupied the consulate and

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 130. Tehran, Oct. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey.

lowered the Turkish flag. This caused a panic in the city and the Iranian Governor was greatly embarrassed at the Russian Consul's interference in the city. The Turkish Embassy communicated its anxiety to the Iranian Government, requesting the release of their consul. It was a matter of astonishment, for the Iranian Government and the Allies were about to come to terms for a convention and friendly relations. The Iranian Government protested against the Russian force's action and immediately negotiated with the Russian Legation in Tehran. The Russians deported the consul to the Caucasus and claimed that they possessed some documents which showed secret activities against the Russians and that the Turkish Consular staff were spying on the Russian forces in the north of Iran and the Caucasus. The Russian Legation, in reply to the Iranian Government, stated that the release of the Turkish Consul was a matter for concern to Petrograd. However, this incident was interpreted as a vengeful action for the Kangavar and Isfahan incidents.

"Bāmdād-i Raushan" referred to the arrest of the Turkish consul at Rasht and considered it as another violation of the neutrality of Iran. The writer believed it was a matter of surprise; if the Russians and British were insisting on the neutrality of Iran, what would they call that action which threatened the independence and integrity of the country? On the other hand, it would affect the reputation of the Iranian Government among the Islamic countries, and especially relations between Iran and Turkey. The writer expressed his anxiety that there was the possibility that this kind of action would be taken as the Iranian people's attitude towards Islamic countries. He also was of the idea that such occurrences were due to the Iranian Government's weakness and to British policy. He blamed the British for



encouraging the Russians to commit such an action in order to overshadow their violation in the south and attract the people's attention to the north. The British also used the Russians for their purpose.<sup>1</sup> The newspaper, on 16th October, published a quote from "Novoye Vremya"'s commentary of 18th September: "The arrest of the Turkish Consul at Rasht has produced useful effects for us; because using force and power in Iran have always created a deliverer's role and prevented any hostile attitude and influence against us."<sup>2</sup> "Bāmdād-i Raushan" considered the comment a frank confession of the definite policy of the Russian Government in Iran and warned the government:

It is not possible to protect Iran and Iranian rights with Foreign Office correspondence, indicating treaties, international laws and the neutrality of Iran. These words in the ears of foreigners are poems without rhyme. 3

The writer recommended the government to follow a stable and serious policy. He also warned the two powers to ease their harsh action in Iran and leave the Iranian Government alone to maintain its neutrality; otherwise the people would tolerate it no longer.

#### Anti-Allied Domination of Kermanshah

The Germans believed that the Russians had the intention of invading Baghdad via Hamadan and Kermanshah. The landing of the Russian force in the north, under the command of a general, produced a strong belief in Germany that the Russians were determined to enact the plan. A German mission, under the command of Count Kanitz, had

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1. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 94, Sept. 27, 1915/Žī Qi'dah 16, 1333.
  2. "Novoye Vremya", quoted in Ibid., No. 102, Oct. 16, 1915/Žī Hījjah 6, 1333.
  3. Ibid.

arrived in Kermanshah to prepare all the means to prevent the Russian advance towards Baghdad. They began a series of activities in every aspect, studying the strategical places in the Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Hamadan and Luristan regions, negotiating with tribal chiefs for their support, collecting savars, transferrring arms and ammunition and spending a great deal of money. The number of their agents in Iran increased: they arrived with tremendous quantities of arms and ammunition. According to British information, by that time there were at least 60 Germans, 50 Turks and 250 Austrians, mostly prisoners of war who had escaped from Russian prisons, with 80,000 rifles, seven or eight machine guns and bombs.

From the public point of view, the German propaganda was based on two important points; first, respecting the independence and integrity of Iran; second, supporting the Iranians to get rid of the Russian and British yoke and to obtain their freedom. Therefore, the political parties and a large number of people were ready to co-operate with them. On 26th September, Fauzi Bayg, the new Turkish Military Attaché in Iran, accompanied by eleven Iranian students who had graduated from Turkish military schools, arrived in Kermanshah. According to the report of the Iranian Embassy in Istanbul, the embassy had been informed that three Iranian students had been killed in battles. The embassy asked the Turkish Government to permit those students who were willing to go to Iran. Fauzi Bayg asked them to join him on the journey to Iran. Their arrival produced a lot of rumours in the region and in Tehran; therefore, Fauzi Bayg decided to leave them in Kermanshah and to proceed to Tehran himself. However, the residence of these students in the city caused embarrassment to the Kermanshah authorities because at the time Schunemann was collecting his force and the abode of students



in the city seemed unwise, so the authorities asked the government for their departure. According to Mr. McDouall's report, "Fauzi Baig brought some manuscript Korans. One is at Kermanshah and the others were to be sent to other towns, the Turks ask the Persians in the name of this Book to join them."<sup>1</sup>

The first action of Fauzī Bayg was to find a solution to the disagreement and hostile attitude between the tribal chiefs and Husayn Rā'ūf Bayg's force. There was a gathering in the Kermanshah Kārguzārī between the Iranian authorities and Turkish representatives and tribal chiefs, which concluded that

As on the coming of the Turkish army certain regrettable incidents took place between the tribes and the army which are contrary to the good understanding between Persia and Turkey therefore at this time Mirza Mehdi Khan secretary to the Persian Embassy at Constantinople and Fauzi Bey military attache to Turkish Embassy at Tehran have come to enquire into these events. At the Karguzarate the Tribal chiefs undertake that from and after this date they will safeguard the passage of Turkish passengers and merchandise from Kaleh Sabzi to Kermanshah and their followers will carry this out and not allow any loss or damage provided that Turks assure the safe passage of Persian travellers, pilgrims, and merchandise and that Husain Raouf's forces should leave Khaniq in that no such events should occur in future.

Sealed by Karguzar; Samsam el-Mamalek Sinjabi;  
Suliman Sardar Nusret Kalhur; Ali Akbar Sinjabi Sardar  
Nasir; Salar Mansur son of Husan Khan Guran Sardar Muazzam. 2

Meanwhile the union of the tribal chiefs had been encouraged by the Democrat party. Muḥammad Bāqir Mīrzā, a Democrat leader in the

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1. F.O. 248-1112. No. 57. Camp Hamadan, Oct. 16, 1915. British Consulate for Kermanshah.
  2. F.O. 248-1112. No. 56. Camp Hamadan, Oct. 9, 1915. British Consulate for Kermanshah; I.F.O., C. 66, f. 29, No. 8. 1334. The date of the agreement is 12 Zī Qi'dah 1333. Qal'ah Sabzī is a village six kms north-west of Khusravi on the road to Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. In the meeting Rafīq Bayg, the Turkish Consul in Kermanshah, and Captain Sonessen, the gendarmerie commander-in-chief in this region, were present. The leaders of Sanjābī also represented the Gūrān and Kalhur tribes.

city, endeavoured to hold an assembly of tribal chiefs. The scheme was advocated by the Turks and Germans. Schunemann put great effort into achieving these purposes. He employed 300 savars from various tribes and, according to Mr. McDouall, collected 2000 men in all. He believed: "By this means Schunemann had got all the tribes under his thumb, and his subject is to prevent the Governor general being able to raise tribal levies to bring the consuls to Kermanshah."<sup>1</sup>

However, the outcome of all these activities was that the tribal chiefs assembled at Mahidasht, a place between Shāhābād and Kermanshah, and concluded an agreement in which they agreed to leave their differences aside and to be ready to defend the country against the Allies. They sent a message to the Shah and government that:

The darkness of the political horizons of Iran and the gravity of its destiny in the future, warns today every Iranian of a disgraceful future, and informs every patriot of a regretful occurrence ... They assumed the neutrality of the government is a misnomer and have no respect for it ... We devotees of our government have observed such terrifying prospects and damages ... gathering in Mahidasht, God and His messenger are our arbitrators, to be united and undertake to do our utmost, whatsoever, spiritual and material to support our government up to the last foreign violator and willing to obey our popular Majesty ...

O King, endeavour; O Majesty, we can tolerate no longer. How long shall the Russians and British occupy our homeland? How long shall they humiliate our religious dignitaries? Why are foreigners acting directly in the country?

O Majesty, we are still alive, we have the honour to support and sacrifice our lives and properties for our homeland.

Ihtishām ul-Mamālik, the Governor of Kerend; Sardar Nuṣrat, the Governor of Kalhur; Sardar Nāṣir, the chief of Sanjābī; Sardar Muqtadir of Sanjābī; Sardar Iqbāl of Kalhur; Ghulām 'Alī, the Governor of Gūrān ... 2

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1. F.O. 248-1112. No. 56. Camp Hamadan, Oct. 9, 1915. McDouall to Marling.
  2. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 99, Oct. 19, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 9, 1333.



Consequently, British and Russian influence decreased drastically and no hope was left for their friends in this region; on the contrary, the Germans found a free hand to act. Mr. McDouall reported:

The chief reason of the decay of British and Russian influence is that we were in Hamadan at first, though some of tribes and towns people were with Schunemann the majority both of tribes and town were our partisans and expected us to come with a sufficient force, ... but since the Kangavar affair and our return to Hamadan and time has passed and they have no news of our coming people have become hopeless ... Schunemann's position has much improved and is increased by the large sums he has paid and is paying. 1

The vast German activities produced the idea in the British that the German Consul wished to raise twenty thousand men to reinforce the Turkish troops in Baghdad.<sup>2</sup>

#### Hamadan in Crisis

German activities spread all over the Hamadan, Kurdistan and Luristan regions. They were determined to prevent the Russian force advancing from any direction through these regions towards Baghdad. After the Kangavar conflict, the return of the Allied Consuls to Hamadan produced a tense atmosphere in the city. The Allied Consuls considered the Kangavar conflict an insult to their prestige and were determined to go back to Kermanshah as soon as possible. They collected savars and intended to use all possible means to return to Kermanshah. The British and Russian Legations also kept the Iranian Government under pressure to despatch forces to deter any German hostility and to escort the consuls to Kermanshah.

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1. F.O. 248-1112. No. 56. Camp Hamadan, Oct. 9, 1915. McDouall to Marling.
  2. F.O. 371-2435. Tele. No. 1940. Sept. 14, 1915. Cox to Secretary to the Government of India.

On the other hand, the Germans and their allies, in order to neutralise any Allied attempt to advance to Kermanshah, centralised anti-Allied activities in Hamadan and made preparations to confront them on the spot. The "situation at Hamadan is considered serious."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Marling reported: "German consular agent at Hamadan is collecting men, with avowed intention of attacking British and Russian consuls and driving them from their posts."<sup>2</sup>

The Iranian Governor, Amīr Afkham, was unable to control the affairs of the city. The region became subject to disorder and the people were very scared and extremely anxious. As a majority of the people were at any rate against the Allies, the position of the British and Russian Consuls and their subjects became crucial. From Hamadan there was a message to the government, Majlis and newspapers:

Non-existence is better than "living" in disgrace

This is the last petition which we will despatch to His Majesty and the authorities to implore that the Russian and British Consuls in Kermanshah have returned from Kangavar. They have the intention of collecting forces in order to go back to their posts. Their enemy also intends to take action against them. There is the possibility that they will come into conflict and consequently the hopeless people of this city will suffer. (Our) neutrality has not been respected, (our) prestige has been dissipated; we opposed our 'ulamā''s orders. (Therefore) we announced our lack of zeal and spirit. We will be destroyed in disgrace. He looses in this world as well as the hereafter. That is an evident loss. (3) A nation like us without spirit and zeal will naturally and logically disappear from the world ... Now either remove them from Hamadan as soon as possible or leave them with us ... 4

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1. F.O. 371-2435. Tele. No. 2067. Sept. 19, 1915. Cox to Secretary to the Government of India.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 335. Tehran, Sept. 12, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. Qur'ān XXII 12.
  4. "Naubahār", No. 73, Sept. 10, 1915/Shavvāl 10, 1333.



The Iranian Government did not agree to despatch the Cossack Brigade to Hamadan, because the gendarmes had already hinted of their attitude against the Allies. Consequently the arrival of the Cossack force in Hamadan would have made a collision between the two Iranian forces inevitable. In spite of the Iranian Government's protest against the despatching of Iranian Cossacks to Hamadan, the Russian Minister in Tehran ordered the Russian officers commanding the Cossacks to send 300 men to Hamadan. The Iranian Cossacks arrived in Hamadan and were stationed at Muṣalā Qal'ah, which was situated on a hill and possessed an important strategical point in the city. They fortified the castle and were ready to confront any aggression. Mr. Marling reported that: "Arrival of 300 persian cassacks of brigade sent by Russian Minister in spite of protests of Persian Government has quite restored the situation."<sup>1</sup> "Bāmdād-i Raushan" believed the opposite: that the situation was very complicated:

The people are extremely terrified and anxious about recent happenings. Some are leaving Hamadan. On the one hand the fortification of Cossacks at Muṣalā and increase of artillery forces, on the other hand the intrigues of internal and foreign envoys, have led the condition to the point that every hour they expect intensive conflict in the city. 2

According to "Novoye Vremya", the Democrats had asked the British and Russian Consuls to leave the city. The situation was so critical that the British Government authorised Mr. Marling to withdraw the consuls from Hamadan but hoped that it would not be necessary "unless it appears to you imperative that they should do so."<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. 371-2436. Tehran, Oct. 27, 1915. Decypher Mr. Marling.
  2. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 101, Oct. 13, 1915/2ī Hījjaḥ 3, 1333.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 323. F.O., Oct. 22, 1915. Grey to Marling.

### Disbanding of the Gendarmerie

From the Iranian people's point of view, the gendarmerie was considered a national force, opposite to the Cossack brigade. All Iranian political societies and people respected them. Thus the news of its disbanding shocked the country, particularly Tehran. It caused the people, Majlis and newspapers to protest strongly against this intention. Due to the financial crisis in the country, the gendarmes had not been paid for several months. All the gendarme detachments had been recalled to the capital and the guards of the foreign legations had been removed. Colonel Edwall, the gendarmerie commander-in-chief, submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister, but it was not accepted. The Prime Minister convinced him that the government would do its utmost to supply the gendarmes' needs and asked him to continue his service.

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" raised the question, what would happen to the security of roads and safety of trade if the gendarmerie were disbanded, then referred to the background of the force with an introduction about the Cossack brigade, which was organised from Iranian youths at Iranian expense, but for serving Russian interests and influence. The writer then alluded to the British:

The British, who have always considered their interests before everything, wanted a sufficient force to increase their influence. They endeavoured to achieve this purpose at our expense in order to make us weak and subjugate us. At first, they followed their purpose through some groups of mujāhidīn, but they did not obey. They relied then on Bakhtiari forces ... but they did not obey. Simultaneously, the Iranian Government decided to organise the gendarmerie. The British found what they were looking for ... The British Ministers' speeches in Parliament proved their attention to the gendarmerie. The Swedish officers were honest and knew they were employed by the Iranian Government and should be in the service of the Iranian Government



and nation ... After the commencement of the European war, the British expected that the gendarmes would arrest any German, Austrian or Turkish subject anywhere and deliver them to the British envoys.... The gendarmerie did not act so ... The British reaction was to delay their salaries and criticise them bitterly ... 1

The writer asked that the gendarmerie be supported in any possible way, by contributions, taxation or loans, and believed that the existence of the gendarmerie was of vital importance to the existence of Iran. He stated that "the signs of death have appeared on the face of this unique beloved of the Iranian nation."<sup>2</sup> He recommended that the Iranian people ought to help the gendarmes by selling even their clothes. The commander-in-chief of the gendarmes, in an interview with a "Ra'd" correspondent, described the gendarmes' problems and complained about the Iranian Government, which had done nothing to assist them. He stated:

I and the other Swedish officers have done our utmost to prevent the disbanding of the gendarmerie ... but now we feel that perhaps our presence in Iran is not necessary any longer. They tried indirectly to bring about the means of our definite resignation and our inevitable leave. I am surprised that the Iranian Government is not willing for our service to continue; why are they reserved and do not say it openly ... The arrears of salaries of gendarmes is about one million tūmāns. How can I provide for seven thousand hungry gendarmes by meaningless talk? On what grounds shall I be assured that they desire the Swedish officers to remain in the service of Iran? Why should we not be content to resign before being forced to leave this country in an unsuitable way? 3

The British and Russian Ministers in Tehran had another attitude towards the Swedish officers; particularly in 1915, the attitude of

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 89, Sept. 27, 1915/Ẓi Qi'dah 16, 1333.
  2. Ibid.
  3. "Ra'd", No. 14, Oct. 10, 1915/Ẓi Qi'dah 29, 1333.

the British changed drastically. They decided to stop their financial assistance to the gendarmerie. Mr. Marling believed: "There can be little doubt that one of the factors that have enabled the German propaganda in Persia to gain so strong a hold on popular sentiment has been the attitude of the Swedish gendarmerie officers."<sup>1</sup>

The British Legation had complained several times to the Iranian Government about the gendarmerie. Colonel Edwall, in replying to the Iranian Government, which had required explanations for the British Legation's complaints, rejected all the claims and answered each one:

- 1) If the hostile countries blame each other for violating the neutrality of Iran, this problem is not the gendarmerie's concern, and it is not my duty to discuss this problem ...
- 2) The gendarmerie has always endeavoured to oppose any violations in any part of the country if there is any gendarmerie office.
- 3) The gendarmerie has done what foreigners could expect from its office. The gendarmerie office has protected foreign subjects and has given them letters of recommendation. In case they request to carry arms, this should be permitted without regard to personality.
- 4) But concerning the transportation of arms and munitions into the country, I would like to ask ... whether the gendarmerie is an import supervisor or a customs controller ... 2

Mr. Marling expressed the British attitude towards the gendarmerie:

"Swedish gendarmerie may be now considered as practically an enemy force, and most Swedish officers hardly make even a pretence of being neutral."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the British Legation in Tehran endeavoured to bring about all the means in order to put the Swedish officers under

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 86. Tehran, June 10, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
 2. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 109. Sunbulah 26, 1333. No. 2875.  
 3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 296. Tehran, Aug. 26, 1915. Marling to Grey.



pressure to resign and leave the country. The British Minister in Tehran tried to squeeze the Iranian Government to cancel their contracts. The British Government also requested the Swedish Government through diplomatic relations to recall the Swedish officers from Iran; but the Swedish officers were professionals and their government had no authority to call them back. So, Mr. Marling suggested:

Swedish Government is unable to recall them, but it might be induced to send them serious warning to observe strict neutrality. If they would not consent to do so, I would suggest that Reuter's agent here might send suitably worded message to the press. 1

From "The Near East" 's point of view the resignation of the gendarmerie commander-in-chief was a matter of regret, and it interpreted the disbanding of the force as a dangerous occurrence and offered a suggestion:

The situation may be a very critical one for Persia unless the matter is handled promptly and satisfactorily by the British and Russian Governments ... it would be thought that the two protecting Powers would not choose the present moment for allowing the Gendarmerie to be disbanded for arrears in their pay ... But there ought to be no delay in the reforming of a Gendarmerie force, commanded by British Officers from India, whose pay will not be dependent on the state of the Persian Exchequer. 2

The assembling of the gendarmerie force in Tehran had caused anxiety in both ministers because they feared that it "would make Germans master in Tehran."<sup>3</sup>

The Iranian Government was not able to raise any money in order to help the gendarmerie; therefore Colonel Edwall submitted his

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1. Ibid.

2. "The Near East", Sept. 24, 1915.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 346. Tehran, Sept. 18, 1915. Marling to Grey.

resignation again. "Ruski Slov" stated that "Edwall knows certainly that the Iranian Government tried to disband the gendarmerie."<sup>1</sup>

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1. "Ruski Slov", quoted in "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 104, Oct. 27, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 17, 1333.



## CHAPTER II

### THE MUHĀJIRAT

#### Iran's Policy in Public Opinion

The policy of neutrality in Iran had produced an undetermined state of affairs in the country since the commencement of the war. The Iranian Government believed the policy of neutrality was suitable for Iran and tried to convince the foreign countries and the Iranian people of this point, that the maintenance of neutrality was the government's intention and it would be to the benefit of all to support the government to achieve this purpose. But from the beginning, there was no sign of any respect from foreign countries for the Iranian Government's request and policy. The government also did not dare to take the risk, as was suggested by some newspapers, to call on the general public and to rise against any country which did not respect the government's appeal. The Iranian people hoped that not only would neutrality not involve the country in the war but would have some advantages too.

"Parvardīn" mentioned some of those advantages which the Iranians expected and which had been negotiated between the Iranian Government and both great powers since the beginning of the war:

- 1) Cancellation of the convention of 1907 (Anglo-Russian convention of 1907);
- 2) Cancellation of the concession of note belonging to the British Bank;
- 3) Moratorium ...;
- 4) Reduction in interest (on loans);
- 5) Obedience of the Cossack Brigade to the Iranian War Ministry, under command of Iranian officers;
- 6) Abrogation of transactions of properties (from Iranian land to Russian subjects);

- 7) Preventing the Russian Consuls' interference in Iranian tasks, especially in the Iranian Government's affairs;
- 8) Avoiding the protection of reactionaries ... and delivering them to the Iranian Government;
- 9) Giving new loans to Iran. 1

In fact, when the gravity of conditions increased against the Allies, they hinted that they were even ready to promise the Iranian Government the two holy cities of the Shī'a sect, Najaf and Karbalā', in Iraq. Buchanan reported:

Russian Government are therefore inclined to consider that the best means of counteracting intrigues of triple Alliance and secure sympathy of Persians is to hold up to the latter possibility of obtaining certain advantages by joining enemies of Turkey. Russian Government attach special importance to question of Kerbela and Nedjef and return to proposal made them at the beginning of the war to let Persians understand that these places will be removed from Turkish domination and in some way or other places will be in direct relations with Persia ... 2

In spite of the fact that the Iranian people, Majlis and nationalists obeyed the government decision, there was no sign of any advantages to neutrality; on the contrary, some parts of the country were battlegrounds for the hostile countries and had been thoroughly devastated (e.g. Azarbaijan). Other parts were occupied by foreign forces or were disobedient. The rest were in a state of utter chaos. Consequently, the governments which took office were not able to stand long and had to resign. There was some hope that Mustaufi ul-Mamālik's cabinet would achieve something, but it resulted in disappointment; day after day the criticism of his government grew louder and louder.

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1. "Parvardīn", No. 36, Oct. 18, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 8, 1333.  
 2. F.O. 371-2434. No. 1340. Petrograd, Sept. 12, 1915. Decypher. Sir G. Buchanan.



"Ra'd" strongly criticised government policy and wrote:

Those persons who dared to take the reins of Iranian destiny ... have (already) lost everything; why, their whole bodies shudder when they hear the words "specification of a definite policy", and they are afraid to take a decision in favour of Iran's interest. It is fifteen months since the war started and any useful opportunity for Iran has gone, while we do not know (what our position is) and who our real supporters are. 1

"Naubahār" pointed out that "the souls of the nation have reached up to their lips" (i.e. the nation can no longer tolerate this).<sup>2</sup>

"Bāmdād-i Raushan" quoted from an article about the undetermined state of affairs in the country, indicating that:

Is there anything left for Iran to be afraid of losing? ... to release (a country) like Iran from partition and annihilation, politics and prudence are not effective. There is no alternative but to sacrifice everything by a firm decision. 3

"Irshād" looked at the general situation and stated that:

Fourteen months have passed of the European war and Iran has not put forward fourteen steps to improve its affairs ...

Before the war, the excuse of the authorities was the interference of foreigners and neighbours' intrigues. But from fourteen months ago, the neighbours have been engaged in conflicts and considering the geographical situation and religion of Iran, these intriguers have been ready to hear a lot from us. Unfortunately, we have not been prepared to take advantage for fourteen minutes. 4

The writer then complained about the corruption of society and stated his belief that everybody would work for their own personal benefit.

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1. "Ra'd", No. 22, Oct. 19, 1915/Ẓi Hijjah 9, 1333.
  2. "Naubahār", No. 77, Oct. 9, 1915/Ẓi Qi'dah 28, 1333.
  3. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 96, Oct. 2, 1915/Ẓi Qi'dah 21, 1333.
  4. "Irshād", No. 119, Oct. 9, 1915/Ẓi Qi'dah 28, 1333.

He inveighed against the political parties, particularly the Majlis deputies, which in other countries, in spite of the difference in their opinions, would unite and support their country's interest in the face of danger from abroad. He thought that this kind of attitude was the opposite of that in Iran and everyone was just concerned about "his packet". He added that "we have been partial to Germany, Russia, England and Turkey only for personal interest, but we did not want to be patriotic and work for our nation."<sup>1</sup>

The Iranian Government was also attacked by foreign newspapers, particularly Russian ones:

The Persian Government is neutral only in word; it even asserts that it is friendly to Russia. But in fact ... the Germans seem to be the masters, leading open agitation against Russia ...

Some of the members of the Persian Cabinet, including the representative of the Council of Ministers, ... (are) using every convenient opportunity in order to underline the neutrality of Persia and the sympathy of the government with Russia. 2

Colonel Yate, a member of the British Parliament, stated:

Persia, as we all know, is supposed to be a neutral country, yet we find that the whole of Persia is occupied and terrorised by armed bands under German officers, who apparently are doing their best to raise the whole country against us. The Persian Government is powerless. The Shah himself is helpless. The Majliss do nothing but talk and try to make as much money as they can for themselves ...

... Nothing can be expected of the Persian Government. Nothing can be done by them. They are hopeless and helpless. 3

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1. Ibid.

2. "Novoye Vremya", Oct. 15(28), 1915.

3. "The Near East", Oct. 8, 1915.



Apparently, there was no political friction among the parties in the Majlis on foreign policy, but they had been strongly criticised by other political groups and newspapers. The Democrats were blamed for creating problems in the country's affairs, especially in overthrowing the various governments. "The Near East" wrote:

The Democratic party constitutes, in fact the Radical party in the Mejliss, it holds in check all the Cabinets that assume office. Rather than give way to the Democratic deputies, three of these Cabinets have preferred to resign, ...

The Democrats protest because Great Britain and Russia do not withdraw their troops from Persian territory; but they find nothing to say against the massacres and organised pillaging in Azerbaijan carried out by the Turkish troops ... They are silent regarding the violation of frontier in the neighbourhood of Kermanshah by the troops of Reouf Bey ... 1

The intensity of the Democrats' activities against the Allies made them well-known throughout the country and, in spite of being in the overall minority, it had powerful influence in the Majlis and in the government's affairs. They claimed that most people had sympathy with them and the party was the leader of the nation; therefore, on any necessary occasions, publishing a proclamation expressed the party policy. The Democrats' proclamation No. 272 on 25th September 1915, indicated the critical situation of the country which was increasing rapidly, and accused foreign enemies and traitors' activities for causing the problems. The proclamation explained that the country's enemies had a plan consisting of two purposes: firstly, to nullify the economic power and defensive force of the country; secondly, to weaken the national sentiments. Then it addressed itself to the nation:

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1. Ibid. See also The Parliamentary Debates (Official Report), Fifth Series, Volume LXXIV, House of Commons, Seventh Volume of Session 1914-15 (London, 1915), 759-64.

Today, as you see, the foreign politic has achieved the first part and our economic power and defensive force have been paralysed ... and recently they have been acting extraordinarily to fulfil the second part by various inducements ... to attack our national feeling ...

Fortunately they have not yet been successful. The fight is continuing between patriots and the enemy ... The Democrats are at the front of the battle ... 1

The party advised the nation that if the people were able to defeat their enemies in the second aim, the nation would be able to rebuild the economic and defensive powers of the country very soon. The Democrats' motto was "withstand, unite and fight". The party also warned its members that their enemies intended to bring discord to the party's organisation and members.

"Ra'd" published a commentary on the Democrats' proclamation. The writer believed that it was unjust that the Democrats claimed that they were the party who confronted foreign violations. He referred to some people who had fought and were not members of the Democrat Party. He believed the proclamation should have been addressed to the entire nation without discriminating between political views.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Irano-German Convention

The Iranian Government had tried its utmost to come to terms with the Allies, to conclude an agreement. The Allies followed their policy of procrastination, which produced great disappointment to the Iranian Government. The turmoil of the country's affairs, the lack of money, pressure of public opinion, the activities of anti-Allied groups and the German-Turkish propaganda dragged the Iranian

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1. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 94, Sept. 27, 1915/Ẓī Qi'dah 16, 1333.
  2. "Ra'd", No. 6, Sept. 30, 1915/Ẓī Qi'dah 19, 1333.



Government towards the Germans, seeking better conditions. The negotiations between the Iranian Government and the Germans had been under way since the beginning of September 1915. It was so confidential that most of the ministers in the cabinet had no knowledge of it. Grey informed Mr. Marling that "German Government have informed United States Embassy at Berlin that Persia is going to join German alliance."<sup>1</sup> Marling was also instructed to find out what progress the Germans had made in their negotiations, what were the principal terms and with whom the negotiations had been conducted.<sup>2</sup> The news of the Irano-German convention was a matter of great surprise to both Allied Legations in Tehran. In spite of the fact that the legations had received reports on all secret matters at the court of the Shah, cabinet meetings, Majlis sessions and all government offices, they had little information about the convention. Mr. Marling set up special inquiries and also met the Prime Minister, asking frankly if such a convention had been signed. The Prime Minister "absolutely denies the truth of it"<sup>3</sup>, but Mr. Marling believed that "negotiations of some sort are on foot."<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, after two months of secret negotiations between Germany and Iran, at the beginning of November 1915, both parties agreed to conclude a defensive alliance. A draft of the convention had been prepared and accepted by both parties.

Vu l'article XVIII du traité d'amitié de commerce et de navigation entre l'Allemagne et la Perse, signé à St. Pétersbourg le 11 Juin 1873, article conçu dans les termes suivants:

En cas de guerre de l'une des Puissances Contractantes avec une autre Puissance, il ne

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1. F.O. 371-2436. Washing, Oct. 20, 1915. Decypher, Sir C. Spring Rice.
  2. F.O. 371-2436. No. 333. F.O., Oct. 21, 1915. Decypher. To Marling.
  3. F.O. 371-2436. No. 411. Tehran, Oct. 26, 1915. Decypher Marling.
  4. F.O. 371-2436. No. 415. Tehran, Oct. 27, 1915. Decypher Marling.

sera porté pour cette seule cause atteinte, préjudice ou altération à la bonne intelligence et à l'amitié sincère qui doivent exister à jamais entre les Hautes Puissances Contractantes.  
 - Pour le case où la Perse serait impliquée dans un différend avec une autre Puissance, le Gouvernement d'Allemagne se déclare prêt à employer sur la demande du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah ses bons offices pour contribuer à applanir le differend,"

le Gouvernement Imérial Persan, désireux de montrer dès à présent sa sympathie sincère et sa confiance à l'Allemagne qui de tout temps a suivi en Perse une politique sincère en respectant les droits du Gouvernement Persan,

et le Gouvernement Impérial Allemand, désireux de montrer sa sympathie sincère et sa confiance à la grande Puissance Islamique Persane, et voulant prouver qu'il tient à coeur, même pendant la guerre aussi bien qu'avant et après la guerre, le développement, le progrès, l'intégrité territoriale et l'indépendance politique et économique de la Perse,

et l'un et l'autre également et sicèremement désireux de resserrer les rapports d'amitié entre l'Empire d'Allemagne et l'Empire Persan,

sont convenu de conclure le suivant traité d'Alliance:

A cet effet

entre S. A. Mostovfi-ul-memalek, Président du Conseil des Ministres, et S. E. Mohtèchem-es-saltaneh, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial Persan

d'une part

et S. A. S. le Prince Henri XXXI Reuss, Ministre d'Allemagne, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial Allemand,

d'autre part

il a été convenu ce qui suit:

Article I.

a) Un traité d'Alliance définsive est conclu entre Allemagne et la Perse pour une durée de vingt années solaires. Après ce délai le traité restera en vigueur jusqu'à l'expiration de 12 mois après que l'une des deux Hautes Parties Contractantes aura annoncé à l'autre l'intention



d'en faire cesser les effets. Par conséquent si la Russie et l'Angleterre ou l'une de ces deux Puissances venaient à attaquer une des deux Parties Contractantes, l'autre devra immédiatement prendre les armes pour défendre son allié et lui prêter un secours prompt et efficace et l'appui matériel nécessaire contre toute agression et pour repousser l'ennemi. A cet effet, les deux Parties Contractantes se consulteront, le cas échéant, et se mettront préalablement d'accord sur les mesures militaires, ou toute autre mesure défensive à prendre pour secourir l'allié menacé. Il est entendu que le casus foederis surgira tant dans la cas d'une attaque directe de la Russie et de l'Angleterre ou d'une de ces deux Puissances que dans le cas où la Perse ou l'Allemagne serait forcée à prendre les armes la première pour la défense de son indépendance et de son intégrité menacées ou violées par les Puissances voisines.

b) le Gouvernement Impérial d'Allemagne s'engage à aider la Perse avec tous les moyens dans la guerre, surtout de lui fournir la quantité nécessaire d'armes et de munitions - le nombre du fusils nécessaires à la Perse étant prévu être au moins 100.000 et une quantité proportionnelle de canons, de mitrailleuses et de munitions - et de mettre à sa disposition un nombre suffisant d'officiers-instructeurs allemands. Il est entendu que dans le cas où la guerre se prolongerait et pour remplacer les pertes, des quantités supplémentaires d'armes, de munitions etc. seront mises à la disposition de la Perse pour lui permettre de poursuivre les opérations et la garantir du danger d'être annihilée, par la Russie et l'Angleterre. L'Allemagne déclare, en outre, ne pas avoir l'intention d'annexer ou d'occuper ou de laisser annexer ou occuper par un de ses Alliés après la guerre une partie quelconque du Territoire Persan, et elle s'engage à faire lors des négociations de paix tout le nécessaire pour défendre et assurer l'indépendance politique et économique et l'intégrité territoriale de la Perse aux conférences de paix; il ne se servira pas lui-même et ne laissera ses alliés se servir de la Perse comme objet de compensation, et il interviendra, le cas échéant, pour défendre la Perse conformément à l'article I § a;

c) le Gouvernement Persan s'engage, de son côté, à ne pas se joindre à une Alliance de Puissances étrangères qui serait dirigée contre l'Allemagne ou un de ses Alliés et de commencer à faire toutes les démarches nécessaires pour mettre la Perse aussi vite que possible en état d'attaquer les ennemis. Dans ce but, le Gouvernement Persan procédera à la création et à l'organisation d'une armée régulière qui sera au fur et à mesure des ressources aussi rapidement que possible portée au chiffre d'environ cent mille hommes. L'organisation de cette armée sera



confiée, aussitôt après le commencement des hostilités par la Perse, à une mission d'officiers allemands dont le chef devra être un officier supérieur d'état Major. Sa Majesté Impériale le Schah nommera le Généralissimo et les Commandants des troupes. Mais il est bien entendu que la mobilisation n'aura lieu qu'au fur et à mesure que les armes, les munitions et l'argent seront disponibles, et de façon à ne pas compromettre trop tôt la neutralité persane.

## Article II.

a) le Gouvernement Impérial Allemand s'engage à aider financièrement le Gouvernement Impérial Persan par les moyens suivants:

1.) il fournira au Gouvernement Impérial Persan à compter à partir de la signature du présent traité jusqu'à la fin des opérations et la conclusion de la paix mensuellement une somme nécessaire et suffisante pour les dépenses de guerre,

2.) en outre une somme d'un kouror (500.000) de tomans mensuellement sera mise à la disposition exclusive du Gouvernement Impérial Persan pour les dépenses de l'administration civile,

b) les sommes susmentionnées seront considérées comme avances d'un gros emprunt pour lequel un accord spécial sera dès à présent conclu à Berlin et qui aura pour but de fournir à la Perse, aussi après la fin des guerres, la création et le maintien d'une administration régulière ainsi que pour une réforme productive. Il est convenu d'ores et déjà que les conditions de cet emprunt ne seront en tout cas pas plus onéreuses que celles des emprunts contractés par la Turquie en Allemagne.

c) le Gouvernement Impérial Allemand s'engage à faire lors des négociations de paix, d'accord avec le Gouvernement Impérial Persan, tout le nécessaire pour libérer entièrement la Perse de ses obligations envers ses créanciers anglais et russes (emprunts et avances);

d) le Gouvernement Impérial Allemand appuiera la Perse, dans la même mesure que ses autres alliés, lors des négociations de paix, après une guerre victorieuse dans le but d'obtenir l'indemnisation des pertes subies par les pays et les populations pendant la guerre ainsi qu'une augmentation territoriale qui ne serait pas contraire aux traités entre l'Allemagne et la Turquie tout en respectant les dispositions de l'article I § b.



## Article III.

Serviront comme garanties du service d'intérêts et d'amortissement des avances et du gros emprunt les revenus des douanes de l'Empire Persan. Au besoin une garantie supplémentaire sera donnée par l'augmentation du tarif douanier actuellement en vigueur, à la revision duquel le Gouvernement Impérial Persan procédera. Il est entendu que l'Article 3 du traité de commerce conclu à Turkementchaï entre la Perse et la Russie le 10/22 février 1828, (modifié par l'article 3 de la déclaration douanière du 27 Octobre 1901), aussi bien que l'article 2 de la Convention douanière entre la Perse et la Grande Bretagne signée à Téhéran le 9 février 1903, seront considérés, aussi bien que tous les traités, conventions, accords signés avec les Puissances ennemies et les ultimata imposés par celles-ci, comme nuls et nonavenus, et le Gouvernement persan, vu l'article I § b de ce traité, aura pleine liberté de négocier et de conclure des traités de commerce avec les Puissances Etrangères pour un nombre d'années déterminé, et conformément aux intérêts commerciaux et industriels de la Perse et à ceux du trafic international. En tout cas la Perse garantit à l'Allemagne le status quo au sujet des droits des sujets allemands en Perse à l'exception des changements expressément prévus par le présent traité d'Alliance jusqu'à la conclusion d'un nouveau traité réglant ces matières.

## Article IV.

Pour faciliter le service de l'emprunt, le Gouvernement Impérial Persan autorise une banque allemande qui lui sera indiquée par le Gouvernement Impérial Allemand à ouvrir des succursales à Téhéran et dans toutes les villes de la Perse et de s'occuper de toute sorte d'affaires financières et commerciales. Le Gouvernement Persan accordera à cette banque toute protection nécessaire. Les privilèges et les devoirs de cette banque ainsi que les modalités et conditions de l'exécution de cet article et de l'article V feront ultérieurement l'objet d'un accord spécial à intervenir entre le Gouvernement Impérial Persan et la banque.

## Article V.

a) la banque aura le droit d'émettre des billets de banque au porteur remboursables à présentation. Le Gouvernement allemand garantira le paiement de ces billets. Néanmoins, pour parer à toute éventualité la banque sera tenue de maintenir une réserve constante d'or équivalente à 1/3 des billets émis.

b) la banque sera obligée pendant un délai de 6 mois à partir de l'ouverture de ses succursales en Perse d'accepter ou d'échanger contre ses propres billets les billets de la "Imperial Bank of Persia"; à cet effet



elle en informera le public par la voie de la presse et par tout autre moyen. Le Gouvernement Persan s'engage, de son côté, à confisquer les biens immeubles de la "Imperial Bank of Persia" et ses réserves métalliques en Perse. La valeur totale des billets de la "Imperial Bank of Persia" ainsi recueillis après déduction de la valeur des immeubles et réserves susmentionnés sera considérée comme une avance donnée à la Perse par l'Allemagne sur le gros emprunt, mais l'Allemagne s'engage à faire, lors des négociations de la paix, toutes les démarches nécessaires pour obtenir de l'Angleterre le remboursement de cette somme à la Perse.

#### Article VI.

Le Gouvernement Persan accorde à la banque le droit exclusif de la construction et de l'exploitation d'un chemin de fer à largeur normale de 1 m 55 partant de Khaneguine et aboutissant à Téhéran. Les conditions de la concession de construction et d'exploitation seront déterminées d'un commun accord entre le Gouvernement Persan et la banque après l'achèvement des études;

#### Article VII.

Au cas où une entente ne serait pas obtenue entre les parties contractantes au sujet des conditions de la concession de construction et d'exploitation dans un délai d'une année à partir de la présentation des projets et devis de la part de la banque, le Gouvernement Impérial Persan remboursera à la banque les frais d'études. Par le remboursement des frais d'études le Gouvernement Persan gagnera toute liberté d'accorder la concession à une autre société, mais la banque aura un droit de préférence valable pour cinq années à condition égales vis-à-vis d'une autre société. En tout cas il est entendu que si la banque obtient la concession, les frais d'études seront à sa charge;

#### Article VIII.

Le Gouvernement Persan s'engage à établir en Perse un service de télégraphie sans fil, et d'entrer pour ce but d'urgence en pourparlers avec une société allemande pour la construction des stations et l'engagement de techniciens et télégraphistes allemands qui serviront au Gouvernement Persan comme instructeurs du personnel persan. Il est entendu que les frais de l'installation et de l'entretien de ce service de radiotélégraphie, qui suppléera autant que possible au système aérien actuel, seront imputés sur le produit du gros emprunt à conclure à Berlin (voir l'Article II § b).

#### Article IX.

Il est entendu que les sujets allemands auront le droit d'établir en Perse des bureaux d'expédition de marchandises



et de les faire transporter par les moyens de transport déjà existants;

#### Article X.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Persan considère comme nul et non avénu dans les limites prescrites par le droit international (ainsi que tous les traités et conventions conclus avec des ennemis avant la guerre, y compris, pour autant qu'elle a trait à la Perse, la Convention de 1907 entre la Grande Bretagne et la Russie reconnue par le Gouvernement Persan à la suite de l'Ultimatum de 7 Zihidjé 1329 et de la note collective russo-anglaise du 29 Zafar 1330) le traité conclu avec la France au sujet du droit permanent et exclusif de faire des fouilles scientifiques en Perse.

#### Article XI.

La Perse ne sera pas tenue de commencer les hostilités avant l'arrivée de 50.000 fusils à la frontière persane. - Au cas où la paix entre l'Allemagne et ses ennemis ou l'un ou plusieurs d'entre eux, intervenait avant que la Perse eût commencé les hostilités conformément aux dispositions de l'Article I § c, l'Allemagne fera - même en ce cas - lors des négociations de paix, toutes les démarches nécessaires pour défendre et assurer l'indépendance politique et économique et l'intégrité territoriale de la Perse, mais les autres obligations de l'Allemagne mentionnées dans ce traité feront alors l'objet d'un accord spécial.

#### Article XII.

Le présent traité restera secret jusqu'à la fin de la guerre européenne.

En foi de quoi le présent traité a été signé par S. A. Mostovfi-ul-memalek, Prés. du C. des Ministres, et S. E. Mohtèchem-es-saltaneh, M. d. A. E., ainsi que par S. A. S. le Prince Henri XXXI Reuss, Min. d'Allemagne, et ratifié par S. M. le Schah Sultan Ahmed.

Fait à Téhéran en double expédition le 10. November 1915. 1

The convention was for twenty years and both countries undertook to support each other in the case of any attack by the British and Russians. The convention consisted of twelve articles, some of which contained two or three parts. After referring to the Irano-German

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1. Gehrke, II, 327-31.

treaty of friendship of 1873, each party's undertakings were described. The most important points of the convention were that the Germans would undertake to assist Iran in the war by delivering arms (at least 100,000 rifles and other war equipment), ammunition, information and officers; Germany and its allies recognised the independence and territorial integrity of Iran and would do their utmost to protect the political, economic and territorial independence of Iran; the Germans would support Iran's taking part in the peace conference; Germany would pay Iran the necessary sums for the expenditure of war and also a subsidy of 500,000 tūmāns for civil administration (these sums would be considered as an advance payment of a loan which would be signed in Berlin later on); Germany would help Iran to get rid of English and Russian debts at the peace conference; customs tariffs would be in favour of Iran; and mobilisation of the country would take place step by step. On Iran's side, the Iranian Government would prepare one hundred thousand men to be trained under German officers; the commander-in-chief of the army would be appointed by the Shah; the Germans would be allowed to establish a German bank and branches in Iran and also have a concession of bank notes; the Germans would have the telegraph concession and would be permitted to establish trade offices in Iranian cities. Article XI would give Iran the right not to enter the war unless it had received 50,000 rifles at its border.<sup>1</sup>

Grey warned Marling that if the convention had been signed the Allies should expect a coup d'etat or declaration of war at any moment. On 28th October, Mr. Marling reported that "I hear convention has been signed."<sup>2</sup> He was instructed to contact the Iranian Government immediately and warn them that:

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1. Gehrke, II, 325-27.

2. F.O. 371-2436. No. 418. Tehran, Oct. 28, 1915. Decypher Marling.



... if Persia has entered into a hostile agreement with Germany, she will be responsible for any consequences that follow from it, and we shall be free to take what action is necessary on our own behalf to protect lives and property of British representative and subjects. 1

Mr. Marling, in a meeting the Iranian Foreign Minister, expressed the British Government's attitude towards Iran in the case of a convention with Germany. The Iranian Minister denied the idea and asked "what grounds there were for belief that there was any convention between Persia and Germany."<sup>2</sup> He assured Mr. Marling that "there was not a word of truth in the report."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Marling pointed out that a coup d'etat might be set up by the Germans and a cabinet organised which would be ready to sign a convention which had already been negotiated secretly. However, the Iranian Minister admitted that the government was helpless.

Although the Russian Minister in Tehran had doubts about the signing of the convention<sup>4</sup>, his government's reaction to the convention was very serious. The Minister for Foreign Affairs held a meeting with the Iranian Ambassador in Petrograd and told him to inform his government that:

The Anglo-Russian agreement was conservative in character and aimed at maintenance of Persian integrity and independence ... if they sided with our enemies that instrument would be used in an entirely contrary sense that would be fatal to Persia. 5

Although the draft of the convention in French implied that the convention had been signed ("le présent traité a été signé ..."), the

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 341. F.O., Oct. 29, 1915. Grey to Marling.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 426. Tehran, Oct. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. Ibid.
  4. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 422. Tehran, Oct. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  5. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1596. Petrograd, Oct. 28, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.

German draft does not mention the matter. In fact, the Iranian Government avoided signing the convention until German aid would be received at the border, and up to the 5th November, when Prince Reuss reported the draft of the convention to Berlin, there was no sign of German assistance; even a month later, Litten, a German representative in Tehran, complained in his report about the situation in Iran and indicated that the convention had not yet been signed.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Marling, also on 5th December 1915, stated in his report to London about the convention: "... subsequent facts show that whatever hopes Germany may have had of concluding a convention, its realisation was still distant."<sup>2</sup> Sipihir was present at a meeting between Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the leader of the Moderate Party, and Prince Reuss in Arāk and acted as interpreter between them. In their conversation Ṭabāṭabā'ī referred to the Irano-German treaty of alliance and Prince Reuss replied that nothing had yet been signed and complained about Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's hesitation. He believed that Mustaufī had strongly insisted on immediate military assistance and a great deal of financial help.<sup>3</sup> Yahyā Daulatābādī believed that Mustaufī ul-Mamālik feared the Russians and British and did not dare to sign the agreement. He was expecting the arrival of German assistance into Iran and preparations for activities against Russia and Britain were ready, but the Russians blocked his intention.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gehrke, II, 191.

2. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

3. Sipihir, 264. For further details on this matter, see Chapter IV, 324. George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs (2nd ed., New York, 1956), 40, indicates that the treaty had been signed, as does Ishtiaq Ahmad, Anglo-Russian Relations, 1905-1919 (London, 1975), 297. Ibrāhīm Ṣafā'ī, Rahbarān-i Mashrūṭiyah (Tehran, 1334 H.S.), II, 171, refers to Gehrke, presumably the French draft quoted above.

4. Daulatābādī, III, 312.



Review of Negotiations concerning the Moratorium

The British and Russian Ministers in Tehran realised that it was a matter of days or even hours before Iran would be on the side of the Turko-German alliance, which would be most undesirable to their governments. They tried every way which would possibly prevent Iran from falling into the hands of the Germans. The most effective way was to raise once more the question of financial assistance, which the Iranian Government needed desperately. The moratorium negotiations had been going on and off during those days; therefore, both ministers endeavoured to urge the Russian Government to agree to financial assistance at any rate. The British Minister in Tehran asked his government to encourage the Russian Government through the London-Petrograd diplomatic channel for the same purpose. Sir Edward Grey wrote to Buchanan:

... Situation in Persia is still critical, and it is essential that Medjliss shall not be given an opportunity in connection with this financial assistance.

Your Excellency should therefore do your utmost to induce Russian Government to send such instructions to Russian Minister at Tehran as will enable him to act in complete accord with Mr. Marling. 1

Grey also authorised Mr. Marling to make the date of the payment 8th January 1915, instead of 8th March, if necessary.<sup>2</sup> The British and Russian Ministers in Tehran used any occasion to squeeze the Iranian Government to accept the British and Russian Governments' terms of the moratorium and warned the government against taking any hostile attitude towards the Allies. The Iranian Government had objected to the last paragraph of the moratorium memorandum and believed it was

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 2384. F.O., Oct. 13, 1915. Grey to Buchanan.  
2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 316. F.O., Oct. 13, 1915. Grey to Marling.

unnecessary. Mr. Marling admitted that the Iranian Government's objection was right and believed that it should be modified as the moratorium would be continued "until a month after conclusion of peace";<sup>1</sup> but the Iranian Government did not insist on the objection<sup>2</sup> and the Russian Minister in Tehran absolutely disagreed with the objection because he already had a problem in obtaining the Russian Government's approval for the present note.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Marling hoped that the Russian Government would allow its minister in Tehran to act according to their suggestion, so there would be no excuse for the Iranian Government to reject the Allies' terms and would reveal their policy. He reported: "Attitude of Persian Government is very equivocal ... There is a strong pro-German in it, ... Prime Minister is also openly influenced ... by Democratic party and press."<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the Iranian Government was under pressure. The news of receiving financial assistance from the Allies was unwelcome in public opinion. The government was blamed for being inclined towards the Allies. The opposition criticised the government bitterly. It seemed the circumstances resulted in the Iranian Government's hesitating to accept financial help. They needed some kind of assistance to affect and appease public opinion. The Allied assistance would be hardly enough to run the government administration. The Iranian Prime Minister, in a meeting with the Russian Minister in Tehran, informed him that at £30,000 per month not even the payment of two installments was enough, for the government needed 1,800,000 tūmāns to be paid at once in respect of arrears on the moratorium. When the British Minister in Tehran asked

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 394. Tehran, Oct. 16, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. No. 130. Tehran, Oct. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. Ibid.
  4. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 402. Tehran, Oct. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey.



the Iranian Prime Minister for an explanation, he pointed out that the Prime Minister knew that the payment of such an amount was impossible and it appeared that he would not wish to proceed with the terms, but hoped to obtain better elsewhere. The Prime Minister replied that the sum was not enough to pay seven or eight months' arrears of payment in government departments and it was absolutely vital for the government to receive it all at once. After discussing the difficulties, the Prime Minister agreed on six weeks for the payment.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Marling reported that he had pointed out to the Prime Minister that:

The two Governments were ready to give Persia financial assistance on the understanding that the Persian Government would take steps to stop the German campaign here, but that nothing whatever had been done to that end ... in the case we might at any moment see his friendly cabinet replaced by a hostile one, and any money we might have advanced would be used against us ...

We must have some kind of a guarantee that the Persian Government would keep its part of the bargain before we paid over the big sum he required. We wished to assist a strictly neutral Persia, but not hostile Persia. 2

The Prime Minister answered that the government had to act very slowly, as public opinion was extremely hostile to the Allies. From Mr. Marling's point of view the Prime Minister's explanation was unsatisfactory; he did not believe "This weak and timorous Prime Minister would sign any agreement"<sup>3</sup> unless inducements were enough to create a "colourable excuse". Mr. Marling reported that: "It looks as if the cabinet were trying to get all the money out of us. They can go line their pocket and resign on the familiar grounds that they

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 410. Oct. 26, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

have not received the support of two Legations."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, he instructed the Imperial Bank of Persia not to let the Iranian Government draw money. After a few days, the government struggled with the difficulties in order to receive better terms while not intending to take any risk; finally the government accepted the Allied conditions, and informed the legations:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's note of the 18th instant, enclosing a memorandum containing the conditions on which a delay in the payment of the debts of the Persian Government would be allowed and accepting the moratorium.

My Government hereby express their utmost thanks for the assistance received from Your Government through your efforts to bring about a satisfactory arrangement in this matter, which has been under discussion for some time past, and especially request your Excellency to convey the thanks of my Government to that of His Britannic Majesty.

In view of the contents of the memorandum above mentioned, the manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia has been approached, and has expressed his readiness to facilitate the repayment of the past instalments, but he only awaits your written authority to open at once a credit to meet the bills drawn by the Persian Government. I therefore hope that your Excellency will at once send him the necessary authority in writing, and urge him to show his goodwill in the matter. Considering the assistance already rendered by His Britannic Majesty's Government, the measures taken by your Excellency, and the assurances given for the fulfilment of your promises in connection with the legal question of the moratorium from January last, perhaps there may be no need for referring to the question again.

I avail, etc.

Hassan, Mohtashem-us-Sultaneh 2

In a meeting the Iranian Foreign Minister asked the British Minister in Tehran whether the Allies would let the Iranian Government draw the installments for September, October and November. The meeting was held

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 416-63. Enclosure No. 153. Note communicated to Mar. Marling by Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated Oct. 31, 1915.



in a friendly atmosphere and both ministers thought that it would be wise to let the Iranian Government draw money; but it seemed the Iranian Government was reluctant to do so, as Mr. Marling explained:

The attitude of the Persian Government was more than dubious. They had just accepted our financial support in the shape of a moratorium, but in spite of their constant lamentations of imperative want of money they did not draw on the credit account opened at the Imperial Bank of Persia in their favour. The obvious inference was that the Cabinet did not dare to commit themselves to us by accepting our money. 1

However, on 7th November, the Iranian Government implied its inclination towards the Allies by drawing some money from the bank,<sup>2</sup> but "Persian Government have so far drawn only September and October instalments and part of November instalment. They have not touched arrears."<sup>3</sup>

#### British Activities for a Treaty with the Khāns

The Allies had no confidence in the Iranian Government and had been working on another possibility to prevent the pro-Germans from taking control over more cities and, if it was possible, to gain some supporters. Naturally in this aspect, the khāns were of great value. They had both power and influence which all the hostile countries in the war competed to possess, especially the Allies, who considered their friendship a most desirable factor in that situation. Up to this time the pro-Germans had obtained the support of the majority of the khāns. The Russians had very little sympathy among the tribes. Not only had the British lost a lot of their influence among the tribes, they had in

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. F.O. 416-63. No. 438. Tehran, Nov. 7, 1915. Marling to Grey.

3. F.O. 371-2435. No. 493. Nov. 27, 1915. Decypher of telegram from Mr. Marling Tehran.

in fact gained many enemies as well. Apparently there were no khāns left friendly to the British in the west and the south, except a few who supported the British openly; the rest of them kept silent or were totally against the Allies.

One of the most important tribes in the south was the Bakhtiyārī and their khāns were considered as essential keys to southern Iran's problems. Their friendship was vital to the British interest in the south because, firstly, they commanded a powerful tribe with considerable force in their region, and secondly, the oil pipe was laid through their region and had been guarded by them for years. Therefore, having an agreement with them was desirable for the British Government at the time. Most of the Bakhtiyārī khāns followed the Iranian Government policy as it was interpreted by Mr. Marling: the khāns "like the rest of Persia ... want to be on the winning side."<sup>1</sup> One of the most important khāns was Şaulat ud-Daulah. Due to the lack of a definite policy by the Iranian Government, Şaulat, like some other khāns, was puzzled. He urged the government to make a serious decision. However, on one hand he had been in communication with the confederated khāns and encouraged the others to join the confederation; on the other hand, concerning the rivalry between him and Qavām ul-Mulk and the future of the governorship of Isfahan, he kept in touch with the British and did not personally take any steps against the Allies. In connection with the British Legation, a secret agent of Şaulat<sup>2</sup> asked the British Minister in Tehran for personal protection for Şaulat and in return he would guarantee the British interest and would keep order in his region and

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 358. Tehran, Sept. 23, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
Şaulat's secret agent, as Mr. Marling stated, was "Nimtaẓ(j) Khanoum -- a somewhat remarkable personality if only for being the only woman who takes a public part in politics."



check German agents in the region. This attitude of Şaulat's was considered, as he had been under pressure to join the hostile khāns. The Russian Minister in Tehran declared that his government would agree to the proposal and Mr. Marling asked the British Government for instructions. The British Consul in Shiraz also urged his government to agree to the protection and stated: "There is no alternative if we are to remain in southern Persia and if we do not make arrangements with Soulat, Germans will do so and could render our position untenable."<sup>1</sup>

Although the Indian Government and Mr. Marling personally disagreed with any connections with the khāns which involved the British in the local problems of Iran, the Bakhtiyārī matter was completely different. Mr. Marling explained that "These chiefs exercise influence over thousands of armed men and scores of smaller kahans and over large tracts of country, and they may in fact be said practically to rule South Persia."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marling advocated the idea of having a definite policy towards the khāns in order to obtain a satisfactory agreement with them. The friendship of khāns such as Şaulat and Qavām was too important to the British to be ignored. Mr. Marling warned his government:

If we allow this opportunity to stop, we must naturally expect Germans to take advantage of our failure ... if we wish to remain here at all, it is absolutely essential, as I venture to think, that we should seize the opportunity to cement friendly relation with so powerful chief as Soulet. 3

On the other hand, the Germans also endeavoured to attract Şaulat's sympathy as much as possible. The German Legation despatched a letter to Şaulat and praised him for his patriotic attitude towards his

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 350. Tehran, Sept. 20, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 357. Tehran, Sept. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. Ibid.

country and his friendly relations with the Germans. It was added that the Germans were true friends of Iran and Islam, and reminded him the British occupation of Bushire. Şaulat was encouraged to act against the British. Finally, a present from the German Emperor, a rifle, was offered to him.<sup>1</sup>

However, the British Minister in Tehran was authorised to give a letter of protection to Şaulat and also credit of 200,000 tūmāns for the expenses of concluding an agreement with the khāns.<sup>2</sup> Şaulat ud-Daulah received a letter from the British Legation in Tehran:

His Majesty's Government have authorised me to assure your Excellency that so long as you maintain attitude of friendly co-operation with British government whose policy in southern Persia directed solely to the maintenance of order and tranquillity, to the development of commerce, to the security of the high roads, and in particular at this moment to the suppression of the present disturbances due to the intrigues and instigation of foreign agitators, His Majesty's Legation will afford your Excellency such protection and support as are compatible with friendly relations which happily exist between the British and Persian nations, and will use its influence with Persian Government at Tehran to assure your personal protection and well being. 3

The British representatives in southern Iran and Tehran co-ordinated their best efforts to bring about the means for obtaining an agreement with the khāns, especially Şaulat.<sup>4</sup> A credit of £50,000 was set aside for achieving this purpose.<sup>5</sup> However, the British were able to keep Şaulat out of trouble in the south of the country. Mr. Marling pointed out: "I believe that this measure, coupled with the financial inducements

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1. Sipih, 208.

2. F.O. 371-2434. No. 3045. Aug. 26, 1915. From Secretary of State to Viceroy Foreign Dept., India Office.

3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 359. Tehran, Sept. 23, 1915. Marling to Grey.

4. F.O. 371-2437. Oct. 29, 1915. India Office.

5. F.O. 371-2434. No. 3045. Aug. 26, 1915. From Secretary of State to Viceroy Foreign Dept., India Office.



... was of the greatest value in keeping Soulat clear of German influence."<sup>1</sup> Sir Percy Cox supported the idea of concluding an agreement with the khāns, but "I would point out that events have shown clearly that cash payment do not serve purpose and the Bakhtiyari require as I think is natural, something more substantial and enduring."<sup>2</sup> He believed the best inducement for the khāns would be to encourage them to come to terms with the British, who were offering the governorships of southern cities, especially Isfahan, which was in their region. He stated that the conclusion of a satisfactory agreement with the khāns should bring about friendly relations between the Shaykh of Muhammarah and the Bakhtiyārī khāns. Cox hoped the British Government would do its best to achieve this purpose, which he believed "would be of such immense political and strategical value to us".<sup>3</sup> He simultaneously expressed his opinion in case the khāns did not come to terms with the British:

I incline to belief that while Khans will not do much for us, possibly nothing at all, they will certainly not side in an active way with the enemy and they believe that our having to depend on them to protect oil fields will force us in future to overlook any present infidelities on their part ...

Our policy would seem to be to prevent any alliance between them ... 4

However, the Isfahan matter was out of the question and the British had hoped that the advance of British forces to Baghdad would affect the khāns and that some more inducement would make them willing to accept the British terms; but there was no change in the khāns'

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. F.O. 371-2434. No. 2068. Basra, Sept. 19, 1915. Cox to India.
  3. Ibid.
  4. F.O. 371-2434. No. 2049. Basra, Sept. 19, 1915. Cox to India.

attitude. Mr. Marling described the khāns as "nervously anxious not to be looked on as actively pro-British."<sup>1</sup> He believed neither the khāns in Tehran nor those in Isfahan would accept any proposals which would not be approved by the Iranian Government. He also thought that it was unlikely that the khāns would take any serious action against the Allies. Although he suggested that the only way to gain the khāns' support was to give "promises and gifts and more gifts", he could not resist stating that even the khāns closer to the British Legation had confessed

... quite openly that they would place their loyalty to the Shah before their friendship with us. We might prevent them from attaching themselves to the Germans, but we could not bind them definitely and in all circumstances to ourselves. 2

#### A Coup d'Etat in Shiraz

As long as Mukhbir us-Saltānah was Governor-General of Fars, he had tried to soothe the people's irritation and deter them from taking strong action against Allied subjects in Shiraz. He had friendly relations with most of the parties and tribal chiefs in the province. Although he was blamed by British diplomats for most of the anti-British activities in Fars and his dismissal was the first demand of the British Government for the settlement of the Bushire problem, after he left Shiraz conditions nevertheless went from bad to worse. The British Consul's attitude was strongly against Mukhbir us-Saltānah, which even Mr. Marling considered too pessimistic. O'Connor, the British Consul in Shiraz, believed Mukhbir us-Saltānah had taken part in disturbances

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 358. Tehran, Sept. 23, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
 2. F.O. 416-63. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.



in Shiraz even after his dismissal. He reported that "ex-Governor-General and democrats are hatching a plot to be carried out by help of Gendarmerie."<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, a compact of all anti-Allied organisations in Shiraz, acting under the title "The National Committee for the Protection of Iran's Independence", actually ruled in Fars. The National Army became quite well-known and powerful. The Iranian gendarmerie officers had joined the Committee and taken charge of training the army. In other cities in the province, such as Kāzirūn and Burāzjān, the Committee had organised branches and established training centres for volunteers. The campaign of the National Army had been concentrated in Burāzjān. The volunteers were despatched to the camp after receiving a short training period. As was mentioned, the Government of India had refused to use force against Iranian tribesmen; in other words, the Government of India could not afford, under those circumstances, to despatch sufficient troops to overcome the problems of southern Iran. They were well aware that a weak force in a vast region of south-western Iran might produce disastrous consequences.

Therefore, a hasty agreement over Bushire was concluded between Iran and the British, and the Iranian flag was rejoisted and an Iranian Governor entered the city and apparently took office. Consequently, the agreement prevented the National Army from attacking Bushire. It was indeed effective and appeased the high feelings in the south and left no strong reason for the National Army to invade Bushire. Moreover, such an attack would have been directly against the Iranian Government, which had already taken responsibility for

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 350. Tehran, Sept. 20, 1915. Marling to Grey.

any outrages on Bushire. The National Committee for the Protection of Iran's Independence avoided friction with the Iranian Government. On the other hand, the British troops in Bushire, with the assistance of British naval forces in the Persian Gulf, were strong enough to hold their position. However, in spite of the fact that some conflicts occurred between tribesmen and British forces around Bushire, a general invasion never happened; but the problem of the south remained unsettled. The people expected the withdrawal of British forces from Bushire shortly after the agreement, but this did not take place. From the National Committee's point of view, the Iranian Government was too powerless to take any steps against British forces and policy in the south. The National Committee of Fars many times requested the government for the withdrawal of the British forces from the south and for the prevention of British interference in Iranian affairs. The results were disappointing, as was to be expected; but the National Committee had been preparing the means for a coup in Shiraz for weeks. The British Consul in Shiraz warned the legation in Tehran that there was a possibility of a coup and asked for immediate action. The British Minister in Tehran kept the Iranian Government under pressure to recall the gendarmerie division of Fars to the capital. The government instructed the headquarters of the gendarmerie of Fars that, due to financial problems, the Fars division should proceed to Tehran. Shiraz protested strongly against the government's decision. A crowd gathered at the telegraph office and directly contacted the government and urged them to reconsider their instructions. The people of Shiraz guaranteed to assist the gendarmerie financially. Ultimately the government cancelled the order.



The National Committee for the Protection of Iran's Independence informed the government of their demands and pointed out that if their demands were not fulfilled they would take action independently. The demands consisted of:

- 1) The return of all prisoners [German and Iranian];
- 2) Compensation for damages to the Mujāhidīn [the British had confiscated the money and property of some of the confederated khāns];
- 3) The maintenance of the gendarmerie;
- 4) The evacuation of Bushire by British forces immediately. 1

The Committee, with the assistance and encouragement of German agents in Fars, particularly Wassmuss, decided to design a plan for a coup d'etat in Shiraz. The Iranian gendarmerie officers had great parts in the plan. The gendarmerie detachments of Kāzīrūn, Burāzjān and other towns in the province joined the National Army. The situation became very crucial.

On 23rd October an Iranian employed as munshī (secretary) in the British Consulate in Shiraz and his companion, a ghulām, were attacked and shot at by a gunman; the munshī was wounded and the ghulām died instantly. The British colony were living in fear in Shiraz. The consul, in his report, expressed his opinion that "unless the Persian Government are prepared to take immediately vigorous steps to set matters right in Fars, it is impossible for us to remain here any longer."<sup>2</sup> He complained that most of the British Consular staff had been killed or wounded and he personally was practically a prisoner. He also added that all Iranian friends of the British, such as Qavām, had been threatened with death. He pointed out that the situation

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1. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 100, Oct. 4, 1915/Ẓī Qi'dah 4, 1333.

2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 408. Tehran, Oct. 25, 1915. Marling to Grey.

was intolerable and suggested that they evacuate the city. He stated that the continuation of his residence was useless in Shiraz and moreover he did not wish to leave friends and employees of the British to further dangers. Public opinion had left no chance whatsoever for any influential khāns who were friends of the British at the time to take any measures for their protection. O'Connor was so disappointed and wrote, "I fear we cannot rely either on Kawam or Soulet to deal adequately with the situation."<sup>1</sup> He believed the evacuation of Fars would give the British a free hand to take any desirable measures against Iran, for instance stopping imports and exports from the south or militarily occupying more Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf. In spite of all the imminent dangers which threatened the lives of British subjects in Shiraz, the British Minister in Tehran disagreed with evacuating the city. He believed the withdrawal of the British colony from Shiraz was tantamount to having "both Kawam and Soulet fall into the enemy camp."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marling believed that the colony should remain in Shiraz as long as possible and suggested that if Qavām received an adequate sum of money to collect a troop of savars, the consulate could be protected. However, he could not see any usefulness in withdrawing the colony from Shiraz, unless the Government of India was able to despatch adequate forces capable of operating inland in the south of Iran, with a simultaneous increase in the Russian forces at Qazvin. Otherwise, the occupation of more ports in the Persian Gulf would not have much effect in Iran but would probably add "fuel to the hostility which the Germans have roused against us [British]."<sup>3</sup> The British Government considered the evacuation of Fars

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1. Ibid.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.



undesirable and left the decision to Marling in Tehran. Therefore the consul and colony remained in Shiraz. O'Connor intended to collect savars but due to the hatred of the people for the British, it was not an easy task and in spite of Qavām ul-Mulk, the acting Governor of Shiraz, the consul was not at all successful. Qavām ul-Mulk had no power to control the province, particularly in Shiraz.

Everything was ready for the coup. The Iranian officers of the gendarmerie undertook to carry out the plan. When the time arrived, Captain Agmann, the Swedish officer in command of the gendarmerie division in Fars, went on an inspection outside Shiraz and the Iranian officers took control of the headquarters. On 2nd Muḥarram 1333/ 10th November 1915, in the early morning, the telegraphic connection between Shiraz and Tehran was cut off. All strategic and important places in the city were taken by gendarmes. The government offices, the Indo-European telegraph office, the Imperial Bank and other foreign offices were occupied by gendarmes. All British subjects were arrested and taken to gendarmerie headquarters. The British Consulate was surrounded by gendarmes with cannon and machine guns. O'Connor received the following ultimatum:

Monsieur le Consul,

Le Comité soussigné a l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance:

L'arrestation provisoire de vous et de la colonie Anglaise a été décidée par les patriotes persans, une demi heure, à compter de la remise de cette lettre, vous est accordée pour prendre votre décision. Si vous vous rendez prisonnier avec la Colonie, vous serez envoyé à Borasjan et y serez retenu pour être échangé contre les persans et allemands qui ont été fait prisonniers par vos compatriotes sur territoire neutre persan; quant aux femmes, elles peuvent, selon leur volonté rester en toute sécurité à Chiraz, ou vous accompagner à Borasjan d'ou elles seront immédiatement envoyées sous escorte à

Bouchire. La propriété personnelle et privée ici sera scellée et gardée, de même que le Consulat.

Si après trente minutes (vous aurez l'obligeance de signer l'herue et la minute de l'arrivée de cette lettre sur son enveloppe) vous ne vous rendez pas, le Consulat Anglais et les maisons Anglaises seront bombardées et le Comité décline expressément la responsabilité de toutes les conséquences qui pourraient résulter de votre refus pour vos ressortissants et spécialement pour les femmes. Aussitôt que vous vous aurez constitué prisonniers vos maisons seront occupées et on vous accordera trois heures pour préparer votre départ. Trois mulets pour chaque Européen ou Européenne sont tenu à votre disposition, chacun de vous peut se faire accompagner par un domestique.

Nous ajoutons que l'installation télégraphique doit nous être remise intacte faute de quoi nous tiendrons le directeur Mr. Smith personnellement responsable.

Le Comité National Pour La Protection de  
l'Indépendance Persane. 1

O'Connor had no alternative but to surrender and after three hours, the entire British colony was assembled in gendarmerie headquarters and immediately deported to Burāzjān under the escort of 40 gendarmes. Qavām ul-Mulk, the acting governor, asked the gendarmerie for an explanation of their action and he received the reply that "They were acting under order of the Government and Iran was at war."<sup>2</sup> Due to the disconnection of the telegraph lines he could not contact Tehran. However, the city and region were under the Committee's orders. British authorities and one member of the colony, Mrs. Ferguson, confessed that the gendarmes fulfilled their promises and treated them kindly. The women of the colony reached Bushire safely and the men were kept in Ahram, about 45 km east of Bushire, for negotiations and an exchange of prisoners and demands of the National Committee and some confederated khāns.<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. 371-2727. Sub.-Enclo. to Serial No. 151. No. Cf. 398. Nov. 21, 1915, Bushire. Major A. P. Trevor to Marling.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 471. Tehran, Nov. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey; I.F.O. C. 66, f. 95, No. 10. 1333 H.Q.
  3. F.O. 371-2727. Enclo. to Serial No. 151. No. Cf. 398. Nov. 21, 1915. Trevor to Marling.



The Uncertainty of Allied Policy in Iran

The British diplomatic authorities had anxiously exchanged a series of opinions to find a policy to secure their interests in Iran. This policy must be agreeable to the Russian Government and practical to Iran's condition at the time. The purpose of this policy was to deter the Iranian Government from joining the German side; otherwise they would have to confront a general uprising in Iran which would definitely have drastic effects on Afghanistan and India. Furthermore, the eastern part of the Mesopotamian front would be in danger. Above all the oil fields and 150 miles of pipe-line had recently become of extraordinary value to the British Government. New discoveries of oil fields around Ahvaz indicated prospects of huge development. Due to the war, the price of oil had increased and companies received considerable profit. From the British War Office's point of view, "The Admiralty attach great importance to the continued supply of oil from Persian field for naval purpose."<sup>1</sup> The cutting off of the oil pipe-line would have disastrous consequences for the British Government.

Neither the British nor Indian Governments were able to despatch troops to Iran in order to bring the southern part of Iran under their control. Although the Russians had already landed troops in the northern part of the country, it was not enough even for securing their sphere of influence. Moreover, the British Government was absolutely reluctant to see Russian forces in their zone and at the Persian Gulf. The only remedy which British politicians could conceive for a better position in Iran was to have a great victory, such as the occupation of Baghdad, which would produce a shock to pro-Germans; and in addition

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1. F.O. 371-2435. Enclosure. No. 5. Oct. 16, 1915.

to that, by spending a great deal of money in order to bring tribal chiefs to their side.

Up to November 1915 the former part had not taken place; consequently the latter part would not have the desired effect. This lack of a positive and energetic policy by the Allies in Iran brought strong criticism from Russian and British politicians and press.

"Ruski Slov" stated that the Allies were unable to maintain the neutrality of Iran. The writer referred to German activities in Iran, the transportation of arms and ammunition and their attacks on Russian and British Consuls in some of the cities in Iran. He wondered why both governments would do nothing about it. He stated:

If the London and Petrograd courts do not want to overcome the enemy because of the neutrality of Iran, we say the time has arrived and the Russian and British Governments must put an end to this shameful policy. The Allies ought to put the Iranian Government under pressure to deport all German, Turkish, Austrian and Hungarian diplomats from Iran and if the Iranian Government do not want to do so, the Russian and British Governments can take action and arrest all ambassadors and consuls in Iran and deport them to Turkey. 1

"Novoye Vremya", in a long article about the position of Russian and British diplomacy in Iran, described the situation as unfavourable to both powers as well as to the Iranian people. The writer believed that the activities of the Russian and British diplomats in maintaining a stable government in Iran had resulted in complete failure. He pointed out that the Allied diplomats

... without going into the sources of Persia's heartening embarrassment ... did not improve the situation of wide circles or nations and therefore were not able to call to their side either their faith or gratitude ... Not able to acquire supporters, we have actually gained enemies. 2

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1. "Ruski Slov", quoted in "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 90, Sept. 30, 1915/ Zī Qi'dah 19, 1333.
  2. "Novoye Vremya", No. 14230, Oct. 21, 1915; also translation of this issue in I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 114. 1333 H.Q.



The writer referred to the Potsdam treaty and believed it was the Russian Government's fault by concluding the treaty, which opened Iran's gates to German agents. He stated that the problem of the Russian Government was not about building up the Iranian Government but about defending their situation in Iran from German intrigues. He emphatically pointed out that "the growth of the German influence in Persia happened before our very eyes."<sup>1</sup> He then referred to German activities against the Allied representatives and warned his government of further German actions in Iran. He recommended that the Allied Governments should prevent the German and pro-German groups' propaganda, otherwise Iran would end up in the war against the Allies, as had happened in Turkey and Bulgaria. As a matter of fact, the Iranian Government was the main target of his criticism. The writer accused the government of being under German influence and would do nothing to deter the hostile actions by German agents against Allied subjects. On the contrary:

... in the very height of German war activities in Persia, it demanded from us the removal of war detachments from various occupied points, silently allowing the organisation by German agents of war detachments of Persian nomads set free to murder, spilling the blood of Russian and English diplomatic generals and at the same time looking for the removal from Persia of various Russian detachments.

The Persian Government, it seemed, with sufficient conviction, showed its real face. 2

The writer attacked their diplomats in Tehran for showing a mild attitude towards the Iranian Government and stated that there had been enough negotiations; it was the time for taking action.

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1. Ibid.  
2. Ibid.

"The Habul Matin" referred to the value of neutrality for Iran and considered it "the most important bearing, at the present moment to the peace of the Asiatic continent, to the safety of India and to the future of the Islamic world." The writer believed that the Iranian Government had intended to maintain neutrality and would do its best to enact this intention, but the government had been involved in numerous difficulties. From the writer's point of view a minority part was the greatest cause of the difficulties. He avoided mentioning the name of the party, but it was obvious that he meant the Democrat Party. He stated: "It proves that there is a party in Iran, which is anxious to join Germany in fighting Britain and Russia. It is true that this party is in a minority, but still is in a position to do mischief." The writer then explained the difficulties which the Allies would have to confront, whether the Iranian Government joined the Germans or the Allies. In both cases the British would have tremendous problems to face. In the first place, the British would have war at the gates of India, also in the eastern part of Mesopotamia and so on. In the second place, they had to give huge military and financial assistance which seemed inopportune for the British military and financial difficulties at the time. The writer alluded to the Reuter report from London that stated: "The Persian Legation states that Persia is doing her utmost to preserve neutrality and deal with unrest in Southern Persia in the face of immense military, political and financial obstacles." He then addressed the British Government by discussing the matters in detail and concluded that it was to the benefit of the Allies to support the Iranian Government in achieving the policy of neutrality and allowing the government to proceed on its way without interference in its internal affairs. He believed that this would have a great effect on the Iranian people, because:



The prestige of the Iranic Government in the eyes of its subjects depends upon its power and independence ...

The Persians love their freedom, they are sensitive people and proud of their past glories. They will never submit to any Government which will surrender national freedom and honour.

Although the writer believed that "there is no legitimate excuse for the British and Russian Governments to meddle in Persian matters", nevertheless he recommended that it would be better for British interests if they followed the policy of "non-intervention" in Iran as they had in Afghanistan. He also tried to draw the British Government's attention to the point that "It is also certain conviction that the neutrality of Persia is of greater advantage to England and her allies than her active support."<sup>1</sup>

The British Government was not saved from criticism by British politicians and press. Colonel Yate, in Parliament, criticised the British policy in Iran and believed British subjects and interests had suffered considerably due to the mispolicy of the British Government in Iran. He referred to the confrontation between the British force and the confederated khāns in the south of Iran and urged his government that "Unless these tribesmen are punished severely, their villages razed and their chiefs taken as hostages, things will go from bad to worse." He urged his government to do something before it was too late. He suggested that

... a combined India and Persian levy corps under command of British officers of Indian army, with good knowledge of Persian, to hunt down these various bands ... to put down these German raiders and place the whole of Southern Persia under the charge of the Government of India. 2

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1. "The Hablul Matin", No. 14, Oct. 6, 1915.  
2. "The Near East", Oct. 8, 1915.

In replying to the Colonel's suggestions, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Robert Cecil, stated that owing to the military and financial difficulties in which the British Government had already been involved at the time, Colonel Yate's recommendation was not practical; although a couple of months later, in 1916, the British decided to carry out the Colonel's proposal. Therefore, Sir Percy Sykes' mission set out from India for Iran to organise a local force which was called the South Persian Rifles.<sup>1</sup>

Public opinion was extremely anti-Allied in Iran; the Iranian press was at its most critical against the Allies. This sort of attitude had not been revealed before; particularly, the recent debate in the House of Commons about Iran agitated some of the Iranian newspapers.

"Shūrā" wrote that the reasons for the weakness and inability of the Iranian Government to take any measures to improve the country's affairs were due to the conspiracies and interference of the British and Russians in Iran. It stated that whenever the Iranian Government tried to take a decision to achieve a plan for better conditions in the country, it was faced with interference and disagreement from both powers. Consequently all the government's efforts were nullified. The writer alluded to the revolt of Šamad Khān against the Iranian Government under Russian protection and some more revolts and rebels' names as examples. He added that the Iranian Government sincerely desired to maintain neutrality; therefore he asked the British and Russian Governments to withdraw their forces from Iranian territory. The government had warned the Allies that there would be disastrous consequences for Iran if they refused to do so. The writer then

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1. For details on this subject, see the unpublished Ph.D. thesis of Floreeda Safiri under the same title, Edinburgh University, 1976.



mentioned some incidents, such as the arrest of the German Consuls in Tabriz and Bushire. He continued and stated that not only had the British and Russians avoided withdrawing their forces from Iran, they had increased them, and moreover their policy became even more harsh. Ultimately, the Bushire, Isfahan and Shiraz occurrences were the direct results of their policy. The writer alluded to the debate about Iran in the House of Commons in which it was said that the neutrality of Iran had been disturbed by German intrigues, and asked: "which government's military force has occupied the neutral country of Iran? Are the Russian and British forces not occupying the north and south of Iran?"<sup>1</sup> The writer also referred to Colonel Yate's speech about the death of two British officers in Bushire and asked, "was there not any body to ask the speaker, what these two officers were doing in Bushire and why they went there?" The writer concluded that "the Colonel assumed the occupation of our commercial port is the British Government's right."<sup>2</sup>

"'Ahd-i Inqilāb", in an editorial entitled "the darkest days of Iran", criticised the Allied policy in Iran and believed that it had been proved in the past few years that both the Russian and British Governments had by no means any tendency to give the Iranian Government a chance of having a stable and determined policy. On the contrary they were endeavouring to hold Iran in a disturbed and shaken state of affairs. They were looking forward to seeing the end of the war, for then they would have an opportunity to enact their attention; as "Ruski Slovo" and "Novoye Vremya" wrote, they "would settle all old and new affairs with Iran." The writer was astonished that in spite

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1. "Shūrā", No. 111, Nov. 8, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 29, 1333.

2. Ibid.

of all unjust dealings with Iran, the Allies still claimed that they were the protectors of Iran's independence, and the nation's hatred against them was just the result of the other countries' propaganda. They expected to attract the people's attention in their favour; but he believed that the people were well-aware of the intention and maltreatment of both powers, which had created disaster and adversity for the country.<sup>1</sup>

"Parvardīn", after inveighing against both powers' policy in Iran, blamed them for causing all crises in the country and expressed its surprise that both powers had committed all these mistreatments and humiliations in the name of friendship and humanity and of course maintaining their interests. The consequences of this policy was that the nation was disturbed, the treasury was empty and the country was involved in disorder. The writer continued and alluded to British and Russian interference in the country's affairs and stated that it was just enough that a consul could indicate that a governor should be dismissed; the Iranian Government would be kept under pressure by the legations until their demands were fulfilled. Any notorious man whom they desired would be installed as governor-general for the provinces. The writer went on and stated that it seemed "The Russian and British banks are two pockets of Iran, both legations are two local governments, 'Novoye Vremya' and 'The Times' are two holy books."<sup>2</sup> He also attacked the European newspapers: "The European newspapers ... have no intentions and purpose except concealing injustice and truth, deluding the nations, getting some money and writing something."<sup>3</sup>

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1. "Ahd-i Inqilāb", No. 24, Oct. 5, 1915/Ẓī ʿiḍāh 5, 1333.

2. "Parvardīn", Oct. 17, 1915/Ẓī Ḥijjah 7, 1333.

3. Ibid.



However, the connections between British authorities for planning an immediate policy in Iran was complicated. One of the British political advisers for Iranian matters was Āqā Khān, the leader of the Ismā'īlī sect. The parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had a meeting with Āqā Khān in London and discussed Iran's political condition. Āqā Khān anticipated that the Germans would reach Istanbul; they then would certainly do their utmost to inflame anti-Allied sentiment in Iran. The Germans' purpose would be to pass Turkish troops through Iran and Afghanistan towards India. He believed that the British should gain the Middle Eastern countries' support. One of his suggestions was the partition of Iran. In this case they should install a man such as Zill us-Sultān to govern in the south under British protection and someone else in the north under Russian protection. Āqā Khān believed this scheme was a "perfectly feasible but very immoral policy." The Secretary commented in his report on this idea that "It would be in the teeth of all our undertaking to Persia."<sup>1</sup>

The other course was that the British and Russians would guarantee to the Iranian Government the integrity and independence of Iran. They would assist the Iranian Government financially and allow them to reorganise their country with the help of American officials. Āqā Khān thought that the second course would be successful and it was "more in accordance with our (British) principles than the other course." But he pointed out that if the second one was not practical, then "the former alternative should be at once adopted." The Secretary reported that Āqā Khān believed:

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1. F.O. 371-2437. Oct. 25, 1915. Sect. to Grey.

The one fatal thing was to do nothing. It was no use bribing people here and there or taking any half measure. The Persians would merely take bribes from us [British] and from the Germans and then do whatever they thought right or expedient. 1

In fact, the British authorities did not wish to commit themselves to either of Āqā Khān's suggestions. Meanwhile they continued their current policy, which was to cope with the situation and wait for a better opportunity. Mr. Marling was at the centre of this political puzzle in Iran; some Iranian politicians blamed him for the discrediting of British prestige in Iran.

"Naubahār" stated that the current British policy in Iran was contradictory to the foundations of their policy. He explained that the principle of British policy was based on attracting the Iranian Government's friendship and public sympathy to their side. The reason for this change, from the writer's point of view, was the attitude of the British Minister in Tehran, who misled British policy in Iran. He stated that this policy had caused the complaint of the Iranian Government and the hatred of the people against the British. He believed that the Iranian Government had done its best to satisfy the British Government's desires and showed their willingness for compromising with them. The writer stated that the discharge of Mukhbir us-Saltānah; the prevention of tribal attacks on the British force in Bushire; the appointment of Sardar Zaffar, a notorious man, as Governor of Kerman at the British request, were due to the friendly attitude of the Iranian Government towards the British; but they received nothing in return, the British did not even withdraw their troops from Bushire. He complained:

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1. Ibid.



Has the British Minister sworn to prove to the Iranian Government and nation that their assistance with British purposes and their submission to the British Government's demands has no value and they still are a government under their mercy or a sacrificial cow?

No, never; neither the Iranian Government will sell (the country) cheaply nor the Iranian nation is so ignorant. 1

Mukhbir us-Saltānah believed that Mr. Marling was not well aware of Iranian culture, attitude and policy.<sup>2</sup>

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" stated that Mr. Marling, with his harsh methods, had complicated the state of affairs between the two countries.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Mr. Marling had to confront a great number of difficulties without many possibilities. Although he had a large credit for his expenditure, compared to the Germans' lavish spending it was not considerable; moreover, the nation's hatred for the British and Russians had paralysed all British and Russian propaganda. Mr. Marling confessed that he did not have the ability to stand against German activities and propaganda; for instance, in the matter of public opinion he stated:

... it is true, our newspaper organs, and one of them, the Asir-i-Jadid most ably and loyally conducted by Matin-us-Sultanah, has done a great deal to open the eyes of public, not in Tehran only but all over the provinces, to the perilous position to which "neutrality" was leading the country. But this sort of influence, valuable as it was, could not alone prevail against German methods. 4

Mr. Marling was on the stage of political crisis in Iran and received all information about political and economic aspects in the

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1. "Naubahār", No. 81, Oct. 22, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 12, 1333.
  2. Mukhbir us-Saltānah, 271.
  3. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 39, Nov. 4, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 25, 1333.
  4. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

country; therefore, he was the one who could suggest some ideas and plans for the survival of British policy and interests in Iran. One of his suggestions was to offer a defensive alliance to the Iranian Government. In his reports he pointed out the possibility of an Irano-German alliance. He requested that he be authorised to open negotiations with the Iranian Government for a defensive alliance between the Allies and Iran. From a military point of view, Mr. Marling believed that the British advance towards Baghdad and seizure of that city within a few days would not make it necessary to send any British forces to Iran; he estimated that the Russian forces in Iran were sufficient to hunt down German agents in the country. From a financial point of view, he was of the opinion that they must assist the Iranian Government with a considerable sum of money and also give a guarantee for the integrity and independence of Iran. He pointed out that "A hostile Persia on the other hand would be most embarrassing to us. To say nothing of commercial loss it means a free road to Afghanistan and a threat, though not very formidable perhaps, to our military operation in Mesopotamia."<sup>1</sup> He added that if Iran joined the Germans, "No financial inducement would keep Kawam and Saulat or even Bakhtiyari faithful to us."<sup>2</sup> He asked to be allowed to negotiate with the Iranian Government on these grounds. He believed this scheme at least would delay the conclusion of an Irano-German agreement. Furthermore, it would give time for Russian forces to arrive in Iran. He warned his government that due to the arrival of some Russian troops in Iran, it would make the Germans anxious and they would do their utmost to persuade the Iranian Government to join them before the

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1. F.O. 371-2435. Tele. No. 415. Tehran, Oct. 27, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
 2. Ibid.



Russian troops became numerous enough to have any effect on pro-German feeling. Mr. Marling reported that the Russian Minister in Tehran in general agreed with him. He stated: "Essential thing is to gain time and I propose to take an early opportunity to discuss the proposition academically with Minister for Foreign Affairs."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the Allied Legations used their utmost ability to neutralise the German influence in Iran. Some pro-Allied newspapers, such as "'Asr-i Jadid", published some articles against German intrigues in Iran, particularly in the south, and of course against the most well-known British enemy, Wassmuss, in Fars. "'Asr-i Jadid" published a commentary on Wassmuss' activities in Fars. The writer complained bitterly about Wassmuss' mischief and believed that he had created disorder and disaster in the province of Fars. The writer criticised the government for taking no measures against him. He also attacked the former Governor-General of Fars, Mukhbir us-Saltānah, for taking part in the problems of Fars and accused him of corruption and neglect of his duties in connection with the assassination of Ghulām 'Alī Khān Navvāb, the British Legation's munshī (secretary).<sup>2</sup>

The British Legation in Tehran also received help from foreigners who were employed by the Iranian Government to work in the government administration. Many Belgian officials had been working in Customs offices all over the country. The British Government requested the Belgian Government to instruct its minister in Tehran and other Belgians who were employed by the Iranian Government to assist the British and Russian Legations and Consulates in Iran with any information which might help the Allies. Baron Beyens, the Belgian Minister

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1. Ibid.

2. "'Asr-i Jadid", Nov. 2, 1915/21 Hījjah 23, 1333.

for Foreign Affairs, accepted the British Government's request and immediately instructed his minister in Tehran. Mr. Marling admitted that the Belgians had done their best; he reported that "Belgian Minister gives us all the information he can gather from these sources and is most helpful in every way."<sup>1</sup>

On 28th October 1915, Mr. Marling realised that the situation was very crucial; particularly, the news of an Irano-German treaty worried him intensely. In his report to the British Government he expressed his anxiety about the safety of British subjects and suggested: "In order to avoid useless danger to colony I should be authorised to send in an ultimatum giving Persian Government 24 hours in which to cancel convention, failing which we break off relations."<sup>2</sup> He also added that he and the colony would withdraw to Qazvin. The Russian Government was opposed to the suggestion and preferred a mild tactic, such as a warning to the Iranian Government. Sir Edward Grey, in replying to Marling's proposal, wrote: "It would be mistake in any circumstances to give Persians the ultimatum which Germany wishes to provoke from us."<sup>3</sup>

There was no way left for the British but to turn to the Russians. The most important factor which saved Allied policy at every crucial time was the Russian force in Iran. At that time a considerable increase in the force was vital for them, and particularly for the British. Therefore, Grey communicated with Buchanan and instructed him to inform the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the British would do their utmost to influence the neighbourhood of Baghdad. He also added

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1. F.O. 371-2436. No. 450. Nov. 12, 1915. Decypher. Marling. Tehran.  
 2. F.O. 371-2436. No. 418. Tehran, Oct. 28, 1915. Decypher. Marling.  
 3. F.O. 416-63. No. 341. F.O., Oct. 29, 1915. Grey to Marling.



that the British Government was well aware of Russian military difficulties but if it would be possible, to send troops to Iran as its "effect might be of the greatest importance."<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the British Legation in Tehran warned the British Government that the Iranian Government might be forced to join the German side. They believed there was no alternative but "an immediate large reinforcement of the Russian garrison at Kazvin ... but a weak addition would be useless."<sup>2</sup> London-Petrograd diplomatic authorities were very concerned about the importance of Iran's affairs. Grey tried to convince the Russian Government that "The urgency of the situation in Persia is apparent and it is clear that Russians and we must act with promptitude if we desire avert most serious consequents."<sup>3</sup> He asked that the British Minister in Petrograd ask for the immediate despatch of a Russian force to Iran. Buchanan was instructed to encourage the Russian Government and informed them that the British army would approach Baghdad and explained that "the capture of the important place will doubtless create a great impression in Persia favourable to our common course."<sup>4</sup> Grey recommended Buchanan to point out that the Russian and British action should be simultaneous. Buchanan, in his report about the Russian attitude towards the British proposal, wrote: "Russian Government is only too anxious to do all it can with limited means at its disposal to take some simultaneous action in North Persia."<sup>5</sup> Buchanan was told that the Russians had already sent reinforcements to Iran but the number of troops was unknown and they would find out if there was any possibility of sending more.

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. 125. F.O., Oct. 16, 1915. Grey to Marling.
  2. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 402. Tehran, Oct. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  3. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 2466. F.O., Oct. 24, 1915. Grey to Marling.
  4. Ibid.
  5. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 1572. Petrograd, Oct. 25, 1915. Buchanan to Grey.

Iran at the Apex of Crisis

The Iranian Government had practically lost the reins of rule over the country. Chaos and panic saturated the capital's atmosphere. The Iranian Government was desperately struggling with internal problems as well as the difficulties created by foreign countries. In addition to all this, there were other incidents, such as a rumour about the organisation of a committee consisting of some politicians and influential persons who were plotting against the government. This group was called The Committee of Corruption by the press. They stated that the aim of the committee was to bring discord between the Democrats, cabinet, gendarmerie, Bakhtiyārī savars and the Majlis parties. The press requested that the government take action against them at once. Meanwhile, Mr. Westdahl, the Swedish officer commanding the Tehran police force, declared that he would not renew his contract with the Iranian Government, which was due to expire on 1st November. Mu'tamin ul-Mulk, the Majlis chairman, announced that he was about to resign.

The capital seemed to be the last point for the belligerent countries' conflicts in Iran. The situation was generally in favour of the Germans. The arrival of the German force in Istanbul and the Bulgarians' entry into the war against the Allies overshadowed the importance of the British forces in the neighbourhood of Baghdad. The prospect of a German victory was considerably high in the eyes of the Iranian people at the time. Meanwhile, due to the possibility of the capture of Baghdad by the British forces, which would have created difficulties in communication between Iran and Germany, the Germans sent a stream of military aides to Iranian cities, in company with German officers. Kermanshah and Isfahan were two main cities where



the Germans concentrated arms and ammunition and savars. From these two cities the Germans distributed military equipment to other cities in Iran. In late October heavy transportation of arms and munitions to Tehran terrified the Allied Legations and their friends. Well-known pro-Allied persons did not appear in public. Farmān Farmā found the capital unsafe and asked the British Minister in Tehran "whether he should not accept the Governorship of Khorassan". Akbar Mīrzā announced that his father, Zill us-Sultān, had despatched a telegram asking him to go to Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Allied Ministers expected a coup in Tehran at any moment and that the Germans would take over the capital as they did in Kermanshah, Isfahan and other cities. Mr. Marling believed that from the middle of October "the Germans were virtually masters of Tehran."<sup>2</sup> According to the reports which the British Legation in Tehran received, it was estimated that the Germans possessed 2,000 rifles and 3,000 bombs and grenades. Two hundred escaped Austrian prisoners from Russia assembled in a barracks not far from the capital. It was believed that six to seven hundred gendarmes would support them. Opposing this pro-German force were five hundred Cossacks and one thousand police, who were not considered very reliable.

The Allied Legations in Tehran, through the London-Petrograd and Tehran-Petrograd diplomatic channels, endeavoured to convince the Russian Government of the importance of the situation in Iran and urged the government that the only alternative to save the Russian and British interests and the lives of their subjects in Iran was to despatch a considerable number of troops immediately into the country. Mr. Marling pointed out that the gravity of the situation might force

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. Ibid.

the legation to evacuate Tehran. The legation had already destroyed secret documents but the idea of evacuating the capital was rejected by the British Government. The British Minister in Tehran was informed that "We do not desire to precipitate a breach with Persia, and it should be made clear that if a rupture takes place it will be due entirely to Persian submission to German agents."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Marling was instructed to communicate a list of all attacks on Allied subjects and employees to the Iranian Government. On 29th October the British Legation in Tehran despatched a letter to the Iranian Government, stating:

Your Excellency,

His Majesty's Government to whom I have of course communicated the lamentable intelligence of the attack on the munshi of the British Consulate at Shiraz and the murder of the Gholam who accompanied him, have naturally been most painfully impressed with this fresh proof of the inability of the Imperial Government to protect the British consuls, and I have consequently been instructed to inform Your Excellency that unless the Persian Government gives redress for this and other similar outrages and shows proof of its capacity to protect British Consular officers in future, His Majesty's Government will hold Persia responsible for any rupture of the friendly relations existing between the two countries. 2

Mr. Marling then recounted all the attempts on British subjects in Iran, such as those at Bushire, Kangavar and Shiraz. He concluded that "This list of outrages will not fail to bring home to Your Excellency the reasons why His Majesty's Government take so grave view of the situation."<sup>3</sup> On 30th October another note sent to the Iranian Government expressed the British Government's uneasiness:

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 336. F.O., Oct. 27, 1915. Grey to Marling.
  2. F.O. 371-2437. No. 134. Tehran, Nov. 4, 1915. Marling to Grey.  
A copy of a note to the Persian Government dated Oct. 29, 1915.
  3. Ibid.



Your Excellency,

... I drew Your Excellency's attention to the dangerous position in which His Majesty's consular officers in various towns in Persia have been placed by the neglect of the Imperial Persian Government to afford them protection to which they are entitled as the representatives of a friendly power.

The presence in the capital of a considerable number of Germans, Austrians, and Turks, many of whom are soldiers, the introduction by the enemy Legations of large quantities of arms and ammunition, the enlistment by those legations of numerous retainers, and other proceedings with which the Persian Government are perfectly well acquainted and which I need not therefore recount, has produced in the mind of my Government the apprehension that even His Majesty's Legation and those of the Allies are not safe from the possibility of attacks organised by Germans, with the Persian connivance, ... 1

In the continuation of the note the British Minister referred to the Irano-German convention and held the Iranian Government responsible for the consequences which followed from this attitude.

Due to the emergency request from London and Tehran to send Russian troops to Iran, the Russian Government instructed the Russian commander of the Caucasus Army to despatch troops to Iran. During the last few days of October the Russian troops landed gradually at Anzali. On the 26th two squadrons and two days later 4,000 men landed at the same port. The arrival of the Russians in Iran produced a great relief at both legations in Tehran and they anticipated that more troops would come soon. The Russian press reported that the arrival of their forces in Qazvin had a great effect on the capital and the situation was improving; the Germans had reduced their activities and the press had lessened their attacks on the Allies.

"Novoye Vremya" wrote:

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 133. Tehran, Nov. 4, 1915. Marling to Grey. Note communicated to Persian Government dated Oct. 30, 1915.

The British and Russian actions have recently had important effects in the country. The situation has changed this week ... the pro-Germans and Turks tried to escape from any dangers. The German Ambassador and some consuls have asked the American Embassy in case of danger if they could take refuge in the American Embassy. 1

The mourning month of Muḥarram was about to begin. Everyone expected some sort of incident. The British and Russian Legations received reports that their lives were in danger and they anticipated that there was a possibility of both ministers in Tehran being kidnapped. They also received reports that the legations would be stormed by mobs during 'Āshūrā. The political condition in Tehran was extremely complicated. Would the Germans bring off a coup d'etat at the last moment? Would they be able to drag the Iranian Government to their side? What were the Allies' intentions? Were they going to occupy the capital and put an end to the neutrality of Iran? The final question was, which one was going to move first. Mr. Marling, however, could not understand why the Germans did not bring off a coup despite being perfectly able to do so. As soon as General Baratof, the commander of the Russian army in Qazvin, arrived in Anzali, he issued the following proclamation:

Due to false rumours which have been spread by the Germans, Austrians and Turks that the Russian force has hostile intentions towards the Iranian Government and inhabitants, I am therefore obliged to declare to the people of Gīlān and neighbourhood:

1) The force which has already arrived and the force which will arrive later definitely have no enmity towards the Iranian Government and inhabitants, and the people can continue their business.

2) I came to Iran just to help the Iranian Government in case our enemy creates disorder. 2

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1. "Novoye Vremya", quoted in "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 104, Oct. 23, 1915/21 Hījjah 13, 1333.
  2. I.F.O. 1334 H.Q. dated Nov. 3, 1915.



The proclamation also contained other points that the condition of Iran had been disturbed by German intrigues, and the Iranian Government was unable to deter them; due to the friendship between Russia and Iran, the Germans were indeed the Russians' enemy and it was the general's duty to stop them. He asked the people to be kind to the Russian troops. The general's arrival in Qazvin heated up the tension in the capital. The Allied Ministers requested to be authorised to give the troops in Qazvin orders without consulting their headquarters in the Caucasus. They also asked for the immediate despatch of the troops to Tehran. The Russian Government refused the first request, but accepted the second one.

The normal activities of the capital were disturbed. The people were in a very tense mood, panic, anger and disappointment revealed on their faces. The Iranian Government gathered all its efforts to do whatever was possible to save the capital. The government was well aware that the belligerent countries had gone too far in Iran, but was absolutely unable to take any measures against them without putting the country at great risk. The German promises had not gone beyond the stage of talks. If the Iranian Government had joined the Central Powers and the Germans could not fulfill their undertakings, the country would have been in great jeopardy. Therefore the Iranian Government avoided taking any action contradictory with its neutrality. On the other hand, the Iranian Government had no hope of receiving any decent suggestions from the Allies. The British and Russian attitudes were as harsh as ever; the British particularly seemed uncompromising.

The concentration of the Russian troops in Qazvin, with the anticipation of more to come, caused the prospect of the capital being in

definite danger. There was no time, the opportunity was moving out of reach, the Iranian Government tried hard to bring the Allied Governments to terms before it was too late. Both powers' policy in Iran during this time could be interpreted as a policy of "the carrot and stick". They tried to ease the Iranian Government by allowing them to draw money from the moratorium credit and put them under pressure by threat of the Russian force in Qazvin. The Allies desired to deter the government from falling into the hands of the Germans for the time being, until the Russian troops had arrived in sufficient numbers to deal with any events. Therefore, when the Iranian Government appealed for better relations, the Allied Ministers showed that they were interested in the Iranian Government's proposals. Concerning the changes and progress in the war and the political situation in the Middle East, the British and Russian Governments understood that it might be possible for them to come to terms with the Iranian Government and to consider its proposal seriously. They also found out that the Iranian Government had planned to organise an army under Turkish and Swedish officers, which was a great matter to be considered.

As soon as the Russian troops arrived in the north of Iran and later on moved to Qazvin, the Allied Governments gained confidence, they became reluctant to the Iranian Government's proposals and enacted tougher attitudes towards them than before. The Shah was many times frankly threatened that he would lose his throne if he had any intentions of following German desires. They also kept the government under pressure and gave them frequent warnings about their policy. Mr. Marling received information that the British Government had informed the Iranian Ambassador in London that:



His Majesty's Government were convinced from recent events in Persia and other symptoms that our enemies were determined by various means to obtain full control of Persia and force her into a breach with Great Britain and Russia.

Such a situation should not continue. It was a matter of common sense for a country like Persia to keep on good terms with her two powerful neighbours and if she allowed herself to be forced into a quarrel she would one day bitterly repent having been duped by the machinations of the Central Powers. 1

The Iranian Ambassador was asked to urge his government to accept the advice of the British and Russian Ministers about the situation in Tehran, "which might have very serious consequences for Persia."<sup>2</sup>

#### Iran and Benevolent Neutrality

There was no indication how the idea was brought up that the Iranian Government intended to follow benevolent neutrality as its policy. However, it was what the Allies desired, though they did not show enthusiasm about it. The policy was suggested by the Iranian Government but the negotiations did not proceed progressively. On the other hand the Germans possessed a strong position in the capital and in other important cities in the country. In spite of the fact that Mr. Marling thought that the Iranian Government was sincere in its intention of achieving benevolent neutrality and was trying to avoid being pulled into the war, he nevertheless had doubts that the government was strong enough to stand against the Germans. Mr. Marling also expressed his opinion about the ministers in the Iranian cabinet:

"I fear that Ministers conscious of their own impotence will put forward impossible demands so as to be able to lay on us responsibility of

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1. F.O. 371-2435. Tele. No. 347. F.O., Nov. 2, 1915. Decypher to Marling.
  2. Ibid.

refusing them and so save their own face."<sup>1</sup> As Mr. Marling had realised that the Allied Governments still desired to gain more time, he therefore suggested that "We must respond to their overtures and show ourselves friendly."<sup>2</sup> The Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a meeting with both Allied Ministers in Tehran, submitted the conditions under which his government was ready to follow the policy of benevolent neutrality in favour of the Allies. The Iranian Minister pointed out that the terms were necessary for appeasing public opinion. They were as follows:

- 1) Settlement of purely Russian question, that is, collection of revenue by the Russian Consuls, and strict observance of Treaty of Turkamanshai.
- 2) Revision of tariff.
- 3) Request for arms etc. from Persian Army.
- 4) Persia to be represented at the peace Conference if other neutral countries are allowed to send Delegates.
- 5) Undertaking to withdraw Russian troops from all parts of Persia will be discussed in a friendly spirit at a later date.
- 6) Recognition by Persia of 1907 convention to be cancelled as well as other undertakings obtained by 1911 Ultimatum. 3

Both ministers immediately reacted to the proposal and criticised the stipulations. Mr. Marling, referring to points 2 and 4, felt that the public had no knowledge of them, for they had not been mentioned in the press or by the ministers at all. He thought that point 4 looked as if it had been prepared in Germany, and finally concluded that he assumed the proposals would not make a "favourable impression in London."<sup>4</sup>

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 432. Tehran, Nov. 2, 1915. Decypher Marling.  
 2. Ibid.  
 3. F.O. 371-2435. 442. Nov. 9, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.  
 4. Ibid.



The Russian Minister admitted his colleague's idea and blamed the Iranian Government for carelessness in negotiating points 1 and 5 with the Russian Legation in Tehran before. However, he indicated that he was willing to negotiate the matters. He agreed about financial assistance for the Iranian Government. Both ministers stated they would inform their governments about the proposals, with their recommendations.

The Russian Government's reaction to the proposals, especially to point 6, was total disagreement. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed his government's attitude: "Strongly against any abrogation of convention of 1907 upon which all Anglo-Russian relations in Persia were based ... such step would be a lamentable confession of weakness ..." <sup>1</sup> Buchanan, in a report from Petrograd, stated that the Russian Government's attitude about point 6 indicated that "Imperial Government are of opinion that such a demand should in no case be granted." <sup>2</sup> From a financial point of view, the Russian Minister indicated that his government would assist the Iranian Government, but "It is necessary to make Persian Government understand that no pecuniary transaction can be effected until the two Legations have obtained positive assurances on this subject." <sup>3</sup>

The British Government had no objections to points 1 and 2. Regarding point 3, they wanted to know what kind of guarantee the Iranian Government would give the Allies that the arms would not be used against them. As to point 5, they thought it was premature to talk about the international situation. The British Government did not wish to commit itself on point 6. Financial assistance was the only

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1640. Nov. 5, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.  
 2. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1646. Nov. 5, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.  
 3. Ibid.

point which the British Government agreed to. Grey recommended to Marling that, if it was necessary, they would increase the moratorium or cancel some of the Iranian Government's debts. He warned Mr. Marling that he should be cautious of offering the Iranian Government large sums of money at one time, which might be used against the Allies. However, Grey also did not wish to discourage the Iranian Government, which had expressed its friendly attitude.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Advance of Russian Troops towards Tehran

Meanwhile, the Russian Minister in Tehran and the British Government through their legation in Petrograd urged the Russian Government to send more troops to Iran. Mr. Marling warned his government that the Germans were perfectly capable of bringing off a coup d'etat easily. He stated that "we may see a cabinet with Mukhbir us-Saltanah at the head of it."<sup>2</sup> The Russian Minister reported that the Germans would attempt to create disorders in the city within the first days of Muharram, which had already started.<sup>3</sup> He asked that the Grand Duke be requested to permit at least two regiments of the Russian troops at Qazvin to advance to Tehran at once. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that he would try to encourage the Grand Duke to send troops as soon as possible, but he was afraid that the Germans would withdraw from Tehran to Isfahan or another city and would take the Shah with themselves; in that case they would have no alternative but to recall the ex-Shah to Tehran.

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1. F.O. 371-2335. No. 350. F.O., Nov. 2, 1915. to Marling; F.O. 371-2335. No. 2655. Nov. 12, 1915. to Buchanan.
  2. F.O. 371-2435. No. 437. Nov. 6, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.
  3. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1665. Nov. 9, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.



As soon as General Baratof arrived in Qazvin, he ordered some Russian troops to be ready to approach Tehran. He had been instructed "to raise prestige of the Russians, before Persia declares war upon Russia and to occupy Tehran if war is declared."<sup>1</sup> Late on the night of 7th November, the Governor of Qazvin reported that the Russian forces had left the city, and so did Mr. Marling in his report to London; but the kārgužār in Qazvin, after investigating the news, contacted the Russian Consul in the city on the following day and found out that the Russian troops had not been sent out of the city; according to the consul, they would leave the city an hour before the noon prayer.<sup>2</sup> The next report, in the late afternoon, confirmed that the troops had proceeded towards Tehran and were estimated as consisting of 1,200 men under the command of General Zolotaryov, with fourteen cannon and other military equipment. They had reached Kavandaj, a village between Qazvin and Karaj. In the morning of the same day in Tehran, Mr. Von de Etter, the Russian Minister in Tehran, had an audience at the court to present his letters of credence on his appointment. During the ceremony nothing was mentioned about the purpose of the Russian troops' advance. But in the afternoon, the situation became crucial. From the Iranian Government's point of view the outcome of the situation was extremely vital to the country. The news also created intensive diplomatic communications, on the one hand between the Iranian Government and the belligerent countries' legations in Tehran and also between the Iranian Embassies in London, Petrograd, Berlin and Istanbul with the belligerent government, and on the other hand, the foreign legation in Tehran with its government. The Russian

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1. Miroshnikov, op. cit., 49.

2. Prayer time on 8th November would have been about 12.50 p.m.

troops' advance to the capital panicked the inhabitants. The Shah stated that he would leave the capital. In the afternoon of 8th Novemeber, the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs called on both Allied Ministers in Tehran and strongly protested against the advance of the Russian force towards the capital. The ministers realised that it was the time to squeeze the Iranian Government even more. They replied:

The attacks and murders committed on our consuls in all parts of Persia and of the total failure on the part of the Persian Government to take any measures whatever to protect them or to punish the aggressors, our Governments, seeing that there was a grave risk lest similar events should occur in the capital where the Germans were making quite unconcealed preparation for a coup of some kind, had decided that it was necessary to bring a small force closer to the capital for our protection. 1

The ministers pointed out that the troops had no hostile intentions against Iran nor would they enter the capital except if disorders broke out. The Iranian Minister assured the ministers that the Iranian Government would do its best to protect the Allied Legations and subjects, and promised that the German savars and Austrian soldiers would be removed. He also added that the armed groups would be disarmed. The Allied Ministers indicated that the Iranian Government had no power to take any measures against them and if the government were planning to rely on the gendarmes, they were already in the pay of the Germans. The ministers believed that not even the government had a friendly attitude. They referred, as before, to the Irano-German treaty, particularly when the government intended to form an army under Turkish officers which probably would be used against the Allies. There had always been an intention to organise a national army in

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.



Iran, but this idea had been discouraged by the British and Russian Ministers in Tehran. In 1915 once more the Iranian politicians began to think of forming a national army.<sup>1</sup> The first step was the recall of Iranian officers from Turkey, where they were being educated. Their presentation to the Shah was a matter of great anxiety, for the Allied Ministers thought they were Turkish officers.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, both ministers stated that they would avoid asking their governments to recall the Russian troops back to Qazvin. The Iranian Minister pointed out that in that case the government would have no alternative but to transfer the capital to another city. Later on the same day, Shihāb ud-Daulah, the Minister for Education, in a meeting with both ministers, stated that he had been sent to receive a reply to two questions. First, on what terms would the Allies withdraw their troops to Qazvin? Secondly, were the ministers ready to negotiate on Iran's benevolent neutrality? Regarding the first point, the ministers stated that it was not up to them. Mr. Marling then referred to the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs' indication that the government would withdraw to Isfahan. He believed that it was "nothing but a threat that Persia would throw in her lot with Germany if we did not agree to Persia's requirements in return for her benevolent neutrality."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Marling reported that he had told the Iranian Minister for Education:

I was not much impressed by the threat as I was convinced that the Shah would not care to take a left seat in Prince Reuss' carriage and I knew the Cabinet did not wish to see Persia involved in a war which could only have disastrous results for her. If the Government was sincere in its professions towards us, it should have the courage to declare its policy openly and let the world know that it

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1. F.O. 416-63. Tele. No. 402. Tehran, Oct. 21, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 108, Nov. 2, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 22, 1333.
  3. F.O. 271-2435. No. 443. Nov. 9, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.

frankly accepted our assurances that the troops had been moved merely to ensure the safety of the Legations ... and had not an unfriendly purpose. We had already given proof of our friendship by according Moratorium and we must have some corresponding sign from Persia. 1

The Iranian Minister replied that the advance of the Russian troops might create a disastrous effect in the provinces. The British Minister believed that it would not make the situation worse than it was for the Allied Consuls in the cities. He alluded to the second point of the Iranian Government's request, and stated that

... the whole thing looked like blackmail, but we were not in a position to defend ourselves and it was ridiculous to ask us to abandon that advantage. If the troops now withdrew to Kazvin I should, probably, be in the same plight as the Consul at Shiraz who had not been able to leave his garden for 2 months. I declined to accept the position, and the nearer troops came the better I should be pleased.

As to the substance of the Persian proposals, the more I thought of them the less I understood the spirit in which they had been framed. To accept them in principle as he suggested, sounded well, but, as regards two of them any acceptance at all was a full acceptance. 2

However, both ministers stated that they would inform their governments about the matters. Mr. Marling reported that "so long as we stand fast, and allowed troops to move nearer, the situation may be saved. It will be certainly lost if we show weakness."<sup>3</sup> Sazanov, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, advocated the ministers' idea and stated that "troops could not be ordered to return to Kazvin till an end had been put to German intrigues at Tehran by removal of Austrians, Germans and Turks, and by seizure of their arms."<sup>4</sup> He even

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. F.O. 371-2435. No. 443. Nov. 9, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.

4. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1673. Nov. 10, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.



suggested that the Iranian Minister should be instructed to advise "the young Shah that if he left Tehran he might not find it easy to return."<sup>1</sup>

The prospects for the independence and integrity of the country were as black as ever. The press were outraged. Some of them openly encouraged the government to join the Central Powers. "Parvardīn", in an article entitled "The 'Āshūrā of the country", after referring to the history of 'Āshūrā, expressed regret for the condition of the country at the time. The writer was astonished that despite many shaking events the people were still sleeping. He criticised the people who claimed to be Muslim but did nothing against unbelievers who occupied their country or were fighting with their Muslim brothers. He stated:

We allowed the enemy to be so insolent as to occupy our homeland part by part. Now, they intend to invade the capital ... to confirm our slavery and surrounding officially ... it is enough self-indulgence ...

Rise for the protection of the homeland and religion ... today is the 'Āshūrā of the country; gone (self-sacrificing) is the basis of religion. 2

The writer encouraged the people to form an alliance and not to be afraid of the Russian troops and encouraged them to fight for their country's independence. He ended the article with some slogans and asked the people to "sweep away the foreigners from your homeland."<sup>3</sup>

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" stated that the Iranian people were still drunk and unaware; they were forgetful and absurd. The writer addressed the people thus:

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1673. Nov. 10, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.  
 2. "Parvardīn", No. 40, Nov. 10, 1915/Muharram 2, 1334.  
 3. Ibid.

Arise, awake ... This is Tehran and that is the Russian force ... we have received two ways of death and life ... (but) death with such humiliation and unmanliness. Partition with fear and submission ... Our neighbours want to cut off our heads. 1

"Naubahār" blamed the Iranian Government for its inability to maintain neutrality and for revealing its tendency towards the Russian and British Governments. He believed the government would enact what both powers desired and would do what they ordered. On the contrary, not only had both powers by no means intended to respect the neutrality of the country, they treated the Iranians in a way in which no one would behave towards his enemy. The writer believed it was a vain aspiration to expect humanity from both powers. He added that despite all their claims of being civilised and humanitarian countries, they showed constantly their cruelty to powerless countries which were not of their own race or religion and wanted to put an end to their existence. The writer recommended the government to follow public opinion because both powers would do what they wanted; he addressed them: "It is enough, undo this tie of adversity ... say farewell to these cruel and bloodthirsty friends ..."<sup>2</sup>

"'Ahd-i Inqilāb" bitterly complained about the state of affairs and wrote:

What kind of life is this, that its option must be in the hands of others? What country is this which has no power at all? Our neighbours want us to die; yes, we will die but the way of dying is in our hands. They want us to die from fear but we will die bravely. 3

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 101, Nov. 11, 1915/Muharram 3, 1334.
  2. "Naubahār", No. 84, Nov. 5, 1915/21 Ĥijjah 26, 1333.
  3. "'Ahd-i Inqilāb", No. 39, Nov. 14, 1915/Muharram 6, 1334.



The writer addressed the Allied countries that it was better for them not to put more pressure on the Iranian people, otherwise they would "wash their hands of life", would sacrifice their lives.

"Shihāb-i Sāqib" wrote that Iran's neighbours' pressure over the country had been so continuous that it now seemed natural. The authorities had almost been strangled by their harsh policy in Iran. In spite of being involved in the war with their enemy on their territory, they did not lessen their pressure on Iran. On the other hand, the Iranian Government had done its utmost to express its friendly attitude towards them. The writer then referred to the discharge of Mukhbir us-Saltānah, the prevention of the declaration of jihād against both powers, and the deterrence of the Mujāhidīn from invading Bushire and also the appointment to the governorship of those persons who were recommended by the Allied Ministers in Tehran. The writer alluded to the Imperial Bank, which without having any official orders, had confiscated the money of Shaykh Ḥusayn Chāhkutā'ī and added that the Iranian Government, for the sake of friendship, did not take any measures against them. In conclusion, the writer asked both powers to modify their policy towards Iran.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the newspapers had turned the sharp point of their criticism toward the Iranian Government and members of the Majlis. The strongest criticism against them was published in the daily newspaper "Ra'd". In the editorial commentaries, the writer attacked the government's policy and administration. He believed the decline of Iran, the crisis in the country and unfortunate occurrences arose from bad policy and the carelessness of the government. The writer held the

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1. "Shihāb-i Sāqib", No. 100, Nov. 8, 1915/Ẓī Hījjah 29, 1333.

government responsible for the disgraceful condition of the country and accused it of failing in its duties. The writer stated: "Any calamity and disaster which strikes the weak body of Iran is due to the lack of a straight policy which our government is unable to pursue."<sup>1</sup> He added that if the belligerent governments were asked about the Iranian Government's policy, their reply would hold nothing but repulsion for such an ambiguous policy. In the issue of 10th November the writer wrote: "It is three months since our ministers have held political negotiations and assured us that the government would declare its definite policy after exchanging views with foreign authorities."<sup>2</sup> The writer complained that the danger had arrived but there was still no sign of any definite policy by the government. He asked the government to take an immediate decision.

"Bāmdād-i Raushan", in an article entitled "The present situation", stated that although the advance of the Russian troops had been anticipated for at least three months, nothing had actually been done about it. The writer then attacked the government for being careless and held them responsible for the situation. He blamed the cabinet and members of the Majlis for being unconcerned with the country's affairs and complained that the government would not follow a definite policy. He believed that under those circumstances the government had three choices: "defending, surrounding, and transferring the capital". He added that, regretfully, the government was still following the old policy, which was negotiating with the Allied Ministers and their governments and expecting to receive a satisfactory reply from London and Petrograd, which was vain. Consequently, the people

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1. "Ra'd", No. 37, Nov. 10, 1915/Muḥarram 2, 1334.

2. Ibid.



did not know their duties, the Shah was in danger and there was an imminent invasion of the capital. The writer advocated the idea of transferring the capital to another city. He was also astonished that the Russian Government had committed such an action and asked: "Do they want to attract the Iranian people to their friendship .. kindness with force is impossible ... threatening the capital would increase the people's hatred and irritation."<sup>1</sup> The writer stated that the Iranian Government had no intention of joining the Central Powers. He believed that the Russian action was the result of British pressure and then attacked British policy in Iran. In his conclusion the writer asked the people to rise to protect the independence and integrity of the country.

"Shūrā" also criticised the state of affairs and complained, "How far (can) negligence (go) and how much carelessness (can be tolerated)? How long is it possible to be patient and how long to be silent?"<sup>2</sup>

"Naubahār", in an editorial entitled "The enemy attacked", referred to the Russian troops' advance towards Tehran. He believed there was no difference between that 'Āshūrā and those previous ones which the Allied Ministers took as an excuse to call the Russian troops to the capital. He asked for a general rising to defend the country.<sup>3</sup>

Both legations in Tehran sent letters of protest to the government against the article in "Naubahār". The Russian Legation protested on 2nd Muḥarram 1334/10th November 1915:

... I draw your attention to the impolite article published in "Naubahār", No. 85, dated yesterday

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1. "Bāmdād-i Raushan", No. 113, Nov. 13, 1915/Muḥarram 5, 1334.
  2. "Shūrā", No. 112, Nov. 6, 1915/Zī Hījjaḥ 27, 1333.
  3. "Naubahār", No. 85, Nov. 9, 1915/Muḥarram 1, 1334.

[9th of November] under the title "The enemy attacked", which Your Excellency will appreciate is a matter of strong and serious protest and will be requested ... either to punish the editor and suspend the newspaper or to banish him from Tehran; thus he will not publish such an insolent and exciteable article again. 1

"'Aṣr-i Jadīd", in a long editorial on the situation in the country, expressed its anxiety at the advance of the Russian troops and referred to the rumour that "'Aṣr-i Jadīd" had been blamed for having a tendency towards one of the belligerent countries. The writer rejected the rumour and stated that the newspaper had remained neutral but was against publishing slogans and exciting articles at the time. He alluded to the article published in "Naubahār", which called the Russian troops enemies, and criticised the writer. He expressed his opinion, opposite to that in "Naubahār", that this 'Āshūrā was completely different from the previous ones. He explained that before there had not been armed men from Russia, Germany and Turkey marching in the streets of the capital. Now, arms and bombs had come to Tehran in such amounts that "one can say we are walking over bombs." He added that the regretful events of Bushire, Shiraz, Isfahan and Kermanshah had not happened before. The writer believed that one of the reasons which caused the Russian troops to approach Tehran was the publication of articles just like that in "Naubahār". The writer believed the situation would not be improved by agitating the people. He asked the people to keep calm, to be patient and to follow the government's decisions. He also recommended the government be concerned with nothing but the independence and integrity of the country.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.F.O., C. 62, f. 5, No. 8, 1333 H.Q. dated Muḥarram 2, 1334 H.Q., No. 235.
  2. "'Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 23, Nov. 9, 1915/Muḥarram 1, 1334.



"Naubahār", in the next issue, published another article, entitled "Friend also attacked", which was a reply to "'Aṣr-i Jadīd". On the same day the "Naubahār" office was closed down by government order and on the recommendation of the British and Russian Legations in Tehran. The editor, Malik ush-Shu'arā' Bahār, was told to leave the city. A few days later the government, in reply to British and Russian letters, announced:

... As Your Excellency has been informed, the government has suspended the newspaper but the arrest of its editor (cannot be carried out) due to his immunity as a member of the Majlis ... I hope Your Excellency would disregard this request. 1

The Iranian Government despatched letters to both legations in Tehran, to be reported to their governments. They contained the Iranian Government's protest against the approach of troops to the capital and also suggested that if the troops returned to Qazvin, the Iranian Government would take certain measures, including:

- 1) 50 soldiers (sarbaz) and a number of Cossacks [to be stationed] at the British and Russian Legations (and lesser numbers at the other Legations.);
- 2) The Escaped Austrians to be removed to a distant point and there to be interned;
- 3) All mujheds (armed men) to be disarmed. By preference the Persian Government would take this in hand after the 10th of Moharrem (i.e. in a week's time).
- 4) No Moharrem processions to pass through any quarter inhabited by Europeans; and even in the native quarters the processions to be under police supervision.
- 5) No arms nor ammunition to be imported into Tehran. 2

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1. I.F.O., C. 62, f. 5, No.11. 1333 H.Q. dated Muḥarram 20, 1334.  
 2. F.O. 371-2435. No. -. Tehran, Nov. 13, 1915. Marling to Grey.

But the Allied Governments and their legations in Tehran had no intention of considering these proposals.

The capital was not quiet; people gathered around government offices and the Majlis, asking and shouting for a definite decision by the government. Rumours circulated in the capital that there would be a food shortage, and prices increased drastically. Meanwhile, a sudden devaluation of notes created a great embarrassment in markets. Transactions in bāzārs required silver and gold coins. Government administration was nearly at a standstill and a general closing of bāzārs seemed imminent. The government was in contact with all important politicians, members of the Majlis and parties. There were constant meetings about the process of political affairs. Many representatives from the 'ulamā', merchants, students and other groups visited the members of the cabinet and discussed the situation in the country. Anxiety at the court was extremely high. The members of the cabinet, politicians such as Mushīr ud-Daulah and Mukhbīr us-Saltānah, some members of the royal family, 'Ayn ud-Daulah and Farmān Farmā, assembled at the court and held meetings to find a way to deal with the crisis. Foreign ambassadors received appointments every day. The ministers of the Central Powers and the Allies met the Shah and the government and, by threats or inducements, tried to incline them to their side. The Shah was encouraged to leave the capital. Sipihr had discussed with the Shah which city should be chosen as a temporary capital. The Shah preferred to go to Isfahan, but Sipihr tried to convince him that Kermanshah, from a strategical point of view, had more advantages, because the city was situated close to the Turkish



border.<sup>1</sup> The Allied Ministers threatened him that "he ran a risk of losing his throne."<sup>2</sup>

The Iranian Government took some measures to prevent any disturbances in the capital and prepared the ground for negotiations with the Allied Legations. Therefore, the Minister of War ordered one hundred soldiers to guard the British and Russian Legations, and other foreign legations were allotted a lesser number of gendarmes. The city was under police control. The mullahs were asked not to preach against neutrality and to avoid inflaming public sentiments. The leaders of local religious processions received the government's request that they should avoid political overtones in their ceremonies. "Naubahār" was suspended and its office was closed down. The most important action was that the government started to draw money under the moratorium from the bank, which Mr. Marling considered "would mean a declaration that Persia sides with us and Russia."<sup>3</sup>

On 11th November, the British and Russian Ministers in Tehran visited the Iranian Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Iranian Ministers tried to convince the Allied Ministers that under the circumstances it was necessary to appease public opinion and that would be achieved by recalling the Russian troops back to Qazvin. If that was done, and the Allied Governments concurred to the conditions on which Iran would follow the policy of benevolent neutrality, then the Iranian Government would announce publicly its intention to prevent German intrigues in Iran. But there was no change in the Allies' attitude. They replied along the same lines as before and added that

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1. Sipih, 237.

2. Sykes, Persia, op. cit., 157.

3. F.O. 371-2435. No. 437. Nov. 6, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.

Persian Government had promised to remove Austrian prisoners and take other measures but had done absolutely nothing but provided a few guards for legations armed with unserviceable rifles. In the circumstances orders to troops could not be modified. 1

The ministers also did not wish to disappoint the Iranian Government totally; therefore, they stated that it might be possible to receive instructions from their governments to negotiate the Iranian Government's proposals for benevolent neutrality. It was pointed out that

Persian Government by accepting moratorium had practically pledged themselves to benevolent neutrality and had no cause whatever to regard presence of troops as unfriendly; if Government were sincere in their professions they would at once make this clear to the public and our governments. 2

Concerning public opinion, the Iranian Ministers stated that it was impossible to fulfill the Allied wishes at the time. The result of the meeting was unsatisfactory for both sides. On the other hand, diplomatic activities of Iranian Ambassadors produced no better results. In London, the Iranian Ambassador, in a meeting with the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, stated that he had been informed by his government to appeal to the British Government to agree to the return of the Russian troops to Qazvin or at least to stop them somewhere near Tehran, but not to allow them to enter the city. He also added that the Russian Minister in Tehran had realised that the troops should not approach further; but Mr. Marling had an opposite version. The Iranian Ambassador received a reply, to inform his government that

... there was complete identity of views between the two Representatives and between the two Governments that the two Representatives were the best judges of the needs of the situation and that His Majesty's

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 446. Nov. 11, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.  
2. Ibid.



Government had complete confidence in Mr. Marling and fully approved his action and language. Moreover, as the two Representatives discussing matter with Persian Government it would be futile to discuss it here ... His Majesty's Government could not expose His Majesty's Legation and British colony to same dangers and murders of which British subjects elsewhere in Persia had been victims. 1

The Russian Minister in Tehran had been instructed to inform the Iranian Government that "there can be no talk of conditions until they have put an end to German, Austrian and Turkish intrigues."<sup>2</sup>

On 11th November, the Russian troops arrived at Yangī Imām, a village between Qazvin and Karaj. The number of troops was estimated as between 1,800 and 2,400 men. A few hours later, there was a rumour that the advance guard of the troops had arrived at Karaj and taken over the Karaj-Tehran bridge. The sequence of the deadlock of the Irano-Allied negotiations and the imminent arrival of the Russian troops in Karaj left no alternative for the Iranian Government but to evacuate the capital. The Iranian Government had anticipated the possibility of an evacuation; therefore it took some precautions. Mustaufī ul-Mamālik had asked a few members of the Majlis to go to Qom and Isfahan to make preparations for the arrival of the Shah and the government.

Ḥusayn Samī'ī, a member of the Majlis with sympathy for the Democrat Party, stated in his memoirs that on 3rd Muḥarram, the leader of the Democrat Party arrived in the Bahāristān gardens and informed the members who were gathered there: "Friends, a definite decision has been taken; the Prime Minister has finally said that the Shah will proceed to Isfahan on the seventh of Muḥarram [November 15th]." As

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 2645. F.O., Nov. 11, 1915. to Buchanan.  
 2. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1686. Nov. 12, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.

soon as his statement was finished the members of the party left in order to make their preparations for leaving the capital. Mr. Samī'ī left Tehran on the same day with some of his colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

The Central Powers' Legations in Tehran were busy making preparations to leave Tehran. Secret documents and files were destroyed. The Germans had already asked the United States Embassy for protection and this proposal had been accepted. Some members of the German Legation took refuge in the American Embassy. The two legations were situated in a semi-detached building, so the wall between them was pulled down and on the following day a sign was pasted on the German Legation, reading "United States of America Legation". The U. S. Legation informed the Iranian Government and the Allied Legations in Tehran that the U. S. Ambassador had accepted a proposal to protect German interests in northern Iran, which was occupied by Russian forces. This decision by the U. S. caused great embarrassment to the British Government and a series of diplomatic communications followed. The Turkish Minister also received U. S. protection, while the Spanish Legation took the Austrian Legation under its protection. Meanwhile, Prince Reuss, the German Minister; 'Āṣim Bey, the Turkish Minister; and M. Logotheti, the Austrian Minister, had frequent meetings with the Shah and government, encouraging them to leave the capital. They "warned the Shah that Tehran would be stormed by the Russian troops and that he would be arrested, if not executed."<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the fact that the Iranian Government was absolutely hopeless, it nevertheless endeavoured to take any measures to save the

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1. Ḥusayn Samī'ī and Amān Allāh Ardalān, Avvalīn Qiyām-i Muqaddas-i Millī dar Jang-i bayn ul-Milal-i Avval (Tehran, 1332 H.S.), 15.

2. Sykes, Persia, op. cit., 157.



capital. Therefore, when Mr. Marling met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, he was most cordially received and the Iranian Minister expressed his government's desire for better relations. Mr. Marling reported that the Iranian Minister had

... most friendly way and asked whether Russian Minister and I mistrusted cabinet as if so a cabinet could easily be formed that would enjoy our confidence. He declared that the Shah had no intention of leaving the Capital ... Government seems to be coming over to us. 1

On the other hand, the Shah sent a message to the Russian Minister in Tehran that he had no desire to leave the capital and expressed his wish "of going to meet Russian troop."<sup>2</sup> But the city was as a sea before a storm. The people had tolerated enough, anything was possible. The Belgian Minister in Tehran reported:

... populace calm but agitation commencing. It is indispensable to prevent a situation which is certain to arise and will probably produce tragic results, that troops should not stop half way but should proceed to Kerej. 3

Mr. Marling constantly requested the arrival of Russian troops in Tehran. He stated, "sole possible chance of saving situation is immediate (?Occupation) of Tehran."<sup>4</sup> Sir Edward Grey also ordered the British Minister in Petrograd to ask the Russian Government and to insist on sending the troops to Tehran; "the entry of Russian troops into Tehran appears most urgent and desiarble."<sup>5</sup> Grey, in the next

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 452. Nov. 12, 1915. Decypher Marling.
  2. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1694. Nov. 14, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.
  3. F.O. 371-2434. No. 57. Nov. 10, 1915. Decypher Sir F. Villiers. Havre.
  4. F.O. 371-2435. No. 448. Nov. 11, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.
  5. F.O. 371-2435. No. 2663. F.O. to Buchanan. Nov. 13, 1915.

despatch to Buchanan, emphatically stated that "In these circumstances I hope earnestly that troops may be instructed to push on and decision be left to our two representatives on the spot."<sup>1</sup> Grey suggested an explanation which could be given the Iranian Government:

Assurances should be given to Persian Government that sole object is to afford protection to our subjects against operation of German officers and officials and that Persian Government have no reason to be apprehensive. 2

On the other hand, he indicated that the British Government agreed with the idea that the German and Austrian representatives in Tehran should be arrested as soon as the Russian troops arrived in the city, and if they had run, should be chased and captured by the troops. The Russian Government had no disagreement with Grey's proposal. But Buchanan reported to London that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs believed that "Division that had been sent from Caucasus had not disembarked and there were not in His Excellency's opinion sufficient troops at Kaszin to occupy Tehran."<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the numbers of the Russian force were a mystery at that time. Some Iranian newspapers, such as "Ra'd", seemed to exaggerate the number of troops and figured it at about 28,000 men. "'Asr-i Jadid" also overrated the number and anticipated that there would be more to come. The British and Russian Ministers, even a month later, had no idea whether the Russian troops consisted of 10,000 or 20,000 men. However, the average estimated was reported as between 10,000 and 12,000 men. It appeared that the occupation of Tehran was not advisable. Although the situation was very crucial, the Allied Ministers confidently

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 2683. F.O., Nov. 15, 1915. F.O. to Buchanan.  
 2. F.O. 371-2435. No. 2663. Nov. 13, 1915. F.O. to Buchanan.  
 3. F.O. 371-2435. No. 1694. Petrograd, Nov. 14, 1915. Decypher Buchanan.



relied on the Russian troops and did not wish to change or modify their tough attitude.

By 14th November, there was no change in the Allied policy and the Russian troops still threatened the capital; as their advance continued, so did the pressure of both ministers in Tehran. The British and Russian Ministers had an audience at the court on this same day. They informed the Shah that the troops had no hostile intentions against Iran and stated that they had some demands to be fulfilled. Mr. Marling reported that:

We urged on Shah that modification of Cabinet should be made such as would satisfy our Governments that Persia meant to carry out engagement implied by acceptance of financial support from us, to put an end to enemy intrigue and that a declaration of Government's new policy of benevolent neutrality towards us should be published. 1

The Shah concurred with the appointment of a Minister for the Interior agreeable to both governments, but on condition that the troops should return to Qazvin. This was rejected completely by both ministers. They tried to convince the Shah that if

... Persian Government did not act against Germans, Russian troops would undertake that task and that if Persia allowed herself to be driven into war against us results to Persia and himself would be disastrous, we were unable to move him from that position. 2

The meeting ended with a most unsatisfactory result. The language of both ministers was approved by their governments. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs advocated that

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 456. Nov. 14, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.  
2. Ibid.

We ought to speak strongly at Tehran and tell Persian Government we are quite aware of what they are scheming with Germans and Turks, and we should be guided solely by our own interests and put every other consideration aside. 1

On the afternoon of 14th November, the capital was extremely depressed. The bāzārs were closed. Those people who had made their minds up had left the city or were leaving. A crowd had gathered around Gulistān Palace where the government was holding meetings. The people were loud and angry. They demanded a definite decision immediately. The crowd stayed till midnight; finally the Prime Minister came out in order to explain the situation and to conciliate the people. Ḥallāj, who was at the back of the crowd, stated:

I saw Mustaufī ul-Mamālik ... with special intonation ... and a shaken voice ... say, "The affairs are bad and you are still here." As soon as he said these words he turned and went away. 2

Ḥallāj wrote that his sentences were interpreted by some other officials around him to mean that they should leave Tehran for Qom. Malik ush-Shu'arā' Bahār, the editor of "Naubahār", had gone to Qaṣr-i Abyaz, a building in the Gulistān Palace complex, where the cabinet held meetings. In a private session, Bahār, with the Prime Minister and Sulaymān Mīrzā, a leading Democrat, discussed the political situation of the country. Finally Bahār asked what had to be done. The Prime Minister said, "The Shah must be taken and leave." Bahār was also advised to leave the capital.<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. 371-2436. No. 1695. Nov. 15, 1915. Decypher Buchanan.

2. Mudīr Ḥallāj, Tārīkh-i Nihzat-i Īrān (Tehran, 1312 H.S.), 97.

3. Malik ush-Shu'arā' Bahār, Tārīkh-i Mukhtaṣar Ahzāb-i Siyāsī-yi Īrān Inqarāz Qājāriyah (Tehran, 1323 H.S.), I, 19.



The Day of Muhājirat

The following day, Monday, 7th Muharram/15th November 1915, was an historical and unique day in Iranian history. It was considered as a defensive reaction against the military occupation of the capital and the political demands of the Allies. 'Izz ul-Mamālik Ardalān, a member of the Majlis at the time, expressed his opinion about the political conditions of the country and the reasons for the Russian troops' advance towards Tehran:

The Czarist Government, with the assistance of the British Government, insisted that Iran should incline towards them and allow the Russian and British force to cross Iranian territory and attack Turkey. This proposal was against the neutrality of Iran and the Iranian Government could not agree with the Russian and British plan. The troops moved towards Tehran to breach the neutrality of Iran. 1

A general movement started from early morning in Tehran. It was a day of saying farewell to families. The streets of Tehran were crowded. From Gulistān Palace to the Gate of Shāh 'Abd ul-'Azīm, on the road to Qom, police flanked the streets. There were crowds on both sides of the streets, they were intensively anxious and impressed. The Shah was going to leave the capital. The people wanted to see the procession of his departure. There was a fear in the city that the capital would share at least the same fate as Tabriz had during 'Āshūrā in 1330, when the Russian troops occupied the city and hanged some well-known nationalists. The most famous one was Saqat ul-Islām, a respected and high ranking member of the 'ulamā'. Groups of people from all classes were leaving the city. Gendarmes had been removed from guarding the foreign legations to the Bāgh-i Shāh, a barracks in

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1. Samī'ī and Ardalān, op. cit., 42.

Tehran. A group of them were in charge of securing the Tehran-Qom road, and the rest were ready to escort the Shah. All foreign legations in Tehran, except the Russian and British, received a letter from the Iranian Government:

I have to inform Your Excellency with great regret that owing to the advance of Russian troops from Kazvin on the capital of H.I.M. the Shah my Master, for which there can be no conceivable cause, the position of the Government has become difficult and impossible.

In view of the fact that my Government would with the greatest reluctance see that owing to the advance of Russian force any incident should occur contrary to the friendly relations existing between Persia, Russia and England, therefore His Imperial Majesty the Shah and the Government have decided temporarily to remove the capital from Tehran and they hope that the neighbouring Governments will, in accordance with the wishes of the Persian Government immediately order the return of all the Russian troops, and facilitate the return of the Capital of His Imperial Majesty the Shah and my Government.

Signed Mothashem es Sultaneh. 1

Therefore, the official withdrawal of the Shah and his government was announced. Ardalān wrote in his memoirs that although the members of the Majlis had been informed unofficially that the government would transfer the capital to Isfahan, nevertheless, on 7th Muharram, in an urgent session in the Majlis, the members received the royal message that "the Shah and government will leave Tehran and Isfahan will be the temporary capital."<sup>2</sup> From the Majlis, Mr. Ardalān went to the palace to gain more information about the situation. He observed that the carriage of the Shah was ready at the palace. Colonel Edwall was waiting for the departure of the Shah. He reported rapidly about

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1. F.O. 371-2438. Enclosure. No. 147. Nov. 18, 1915. dated Nov. 15, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. Sami'i and Ardalān, op. cit., 47.



the advance of the Russian troops into the capital. He warned the Shah that he should leave Tehran as soon as possible; otherwise, it would be impossible for him to leave later on. The government installed Sa'd ul-Mulk as Governor of Tehran with responsibility for the royal treasury and palace. As he understood that the Shah and government would definitely leave Tehran, Ardalān went home to be ready for the departure. The government archives had been packed and all the ministers and the royal family were assembled at the court to leave the city in company with the Shah. There was a rumour that the Iranian Government would declare war on Russia and Britain. The German Minister and Sipihir left the capital in the early morning. The Turkish and Austrian Ministers proceeded towards Shāh 'Abd ul-'Azīm. The members of the Majlis, who were at an urgent session of the Majlis, approved the Shah's and his government's decision and shortly afterward most of the members left the city. Sulaymān Mīrzā, the leader of the Democrats, had already left the capital. Sayyid Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā'i, the leader of I'tidāliyyūn, and Mudarris, the leader of the third party in the Majlis, 'Ilmiyyah, and some independent members also set out on the Qom road. Even two ministers, Ḥakīm ul-Mulk and Mustashār ud-Daulah, went to Shāh 'Abd ul-'Azīm. Mr. Marling described the procession: "a great exodus of Germans, Austrians, Turks, gendarmerie and Democrat deputies was in full progress."<sup>1</sup> The Muhājirīn consisted of all classes of society, 'ulamā', politicians, members of the Majlis, merchants, soldiers and gendarmes, government employees, students and other groups of people. As Litten, a German diplomat in Tehran, said, "Without exception anyone who was not a friend of the Russians went on the Muhājirat [emigration]."<sup>2</sup> All newspaper editors, except those

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1. F.O. 416-64. 157. Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. Sipihir, 240.

of "‘Asr-i Jadīd" and "Ra‘d", left the city. Dihkhudā, the famous writer, ‘Arif and ‘Ashqī, two well-known poets, had left the city; in other words, anyone who had anti-Allied attitudes was leaving for Qom.

On the other hand, on the morning of the same day, the Russian Legation in Tehran issued a proclamation:

... The Imperial Government of Russia have despatched numerous troops into Iran, just for the purpose of preventing the conspiracies of German, Austrian and Turkish intriguers, which have recently increased to such an extent that they threatened security and residence in Iran.

Our enemy's purpose in Iran ... is to destroy the friendly relations which have existed between the two countries ...

Due to the futility of any efforts to obtain the complete union of the Imperial Government [of Iran] and prevent the effect of German activities and gold ... the Imperial Government [of Russia] was obliged to bear the expenditure of [an expedition] to put an end to the German, Austrian and Turkish intriguers ... and to maintain security in Tehran and to make the friendly relations between the two countries stable ...

All our Iranian friends know the Russian forces' arms will not be used against them, their families and properties. The Russian forces will be terrible and horrible against German, Austrian and Turkish intriguers and those who have united with our enemy ... 1

Meanwhile, the Russian and British Legations in Tehran received the Iranian Government's letters:

Military operations and measures taken by the Russian Government in Persia for some time past and increased in severity since the beginning of the War have obliged my Government to protest in order to prevent evil results and to maintain friendly relations. I have in different Notes ... pointed out to the British Legation the evil consequences of the above mentioned

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1. Aḥmad Aḥrār, Tūfān dar Īrān (Tehran, 1352 H.S.), I, 434-35; Daulatābādī, I, 296.



measures. But up to the present these friendly representations, based on amity and our mutual interests, have had no satisfactory result. At least want of regard on the part of Your Government for the representations of the Persian Government and disregard for the friendly relations existing between the two states led to the fact that without any reason the Russian troops in Kazvin advanced on the capital of His Imperial Majesty, which ought to have been respected by the two neighbouring powers. This measure is as much a matter of regret to the Government as of annoyance to the public. Worse than all I have just received information that, contrary to friendship, the Russian troops have left Yengi Imam, where they were encamped, for the capital and that even their advance guards have already reached Karej.

I have received the news of these unexpected measures, which are contrary to the friendship between the two states, with great surprise and concern, and in drawing your attention to the points previously mentioned and also to the former strong protests, I beg to state and once more that contrary to the expectation of Persia the two Governments of Great Britain and Russia have not respected the Persian Government and have taken such measures as are inconsistent with our mutual interests and that the grave responsibility therefore rests entirely with the Governments of Great Britain and Russia.

Notwithstanding the above, the Persian Government, not having the slightest desire to show any spirit of discord or to break off friendly relations with the two neighbouring Powers, have decided, in order to prevent any untoward incident which might be caused by the approach of the Russian troops, to remove its capital temporarily from Tehran, and it hopes that the neighbouring powers will not admit this and will at once send orders for the withdrawal of the troops, so that His Majesty and my Government may be able to return to the capital with the intention of maintaining and increasing their friendship with the two Governments, in which they are most firm.

I ... avail, etc,  
Sd/ Hassan, Mohtashem-us Sultaneh. 1

Simultaneously, the Shah also despatched a telegram to the Russian Emperor:

From the commencement of the conflict among the European countries, I and my government, after consideration,

especially in the interests of Iran, decided to preserve neutrality completely during this conflict.

Regretfully, this decision, which was entirely in conformity with Iran's and Russia's interests, did not receive the consent of the Imperial Government's benevolence and in spite of my government activities, more soil of Iran had been occupied by Russian forces than before. Due to the actions which had no relevance to the friendly relations existing between the two countries, the attempts of the Iranian Government's authorities for protecting neutrality were paralysed and without effect. At this time, I avoid mentioning the arrest of the hostile consuls and the invasion of the Russian force through Azerbaijan on the Turkish border, and so on.

Of course this kind of past incident has produced great harm to the principle of neutrality and engaged my country in a very complicated position towards [other] countries.

Regarding the friendly attitude which has existed between the two royal families from years past and the trust that I have in Your Imperial Majesty's justice and benevolence, I have always hoped that no damage to the dignity of my reign and country has been connived at and the Russian Government will follow a policy closer to the friendly relations between the two countries; nevertheless, on the pretext that, during the month of Muharram, the Russian and British Ministers and their subjects would have no safety, [their subsequent actions] produced great harm to the principle of the neutrality of Iran. The Russian force at Qazvin has moved towards Tehran.

In spite of the fact that there had recently been expressed [our] concordance to the Russian and British Legations and the ministers promised [nevertheless] the Russian force's advance continues; therefore, in the presence of the Russian force, it is impossible for me to rule and it is impractical to protect the neutrality [of Iran]. So, I will leave Tehran and proceed to the central [region] of the country. I want to prove that at any rate, despite the damages to the rights of my reign, I am diligent in protecting the friendly relations between the Governments of Iran and Russia. I will ask all ambassadors represented at my court to accompany me on the journey.

But, due to my sincere feeling for Your Great Majesty and my desire to protect the neutrality which is useful to both Iran and Russia, I will resort to Your Imperial Majesty and ask for instructions that the Russian force be turned back; so I will be able to return to my capital and to enact order and general peace which contains both Iran's and Russia's interests and benefits. I hope



Your Imperial Majesty will approve how much I have sincerely and honestly tried to preserve the friendly relations between the two governments.

Regarding that, I have complete trust in the benevolent intelligence of Your Imperial Majesty; I hope you will not refuse to grant your advocacy and assistance to my endeavour, which is just for protecting peace. 1

A similar telegram, with some changes, was despatched to the King of Great Britain, but, due to the request of the Russian and British Ministers in Tehran, on the same day, the Iranian Government stopped both telegrams from reaching their destinations. The first telegram was stopped in Russia and the second one at Karachi.

The Allied Ministers were confident of the effect of the Russian force, which could easily reach Tehran in a very short time. Therefore, in spite of rumours that on Sunday night, 14th November, the British Legations would be attacked by a mob, the British Minister spent the night as usual. The day after, the Allied Legations found out that the situation was indeed crucial. The arrival of Sipahdār and Şamsām us-Saltānah indicated the importance of the situation. They stated that "The Shah found it impossible to remain in his capital while Russian troops were at the gates ..."<sup>2</sup> Neither the British nor Russian Ministers in Tehran expected that the Shah would make a serious decision. They realised that if the Shah left Tehran, Iran would be on the German side. Consequently, it would be considered a great failure of their efforts and most undesirable to their governments. The ministers determined to do their best to deter the Shah from leaving the capital. Mr. Marling, in replying to Sipahdār and Şamsām us-Saltānah, repeated his explanation that the presence of the

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 9, No. 41. 1333 H.Q., Muharram 7, 1334.

2. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

Russian troops was purely for the protection of the legations, and the troops had been instructed not to move into the city as long as there were no disturbances. The diplomatic communication between the two legations and the court of the Shah continued all morning. In fact, some pro-Allied members of the royal family, such as Farmān Farmā, made great efforts to deter the Shah from leaving the capital.<sup>1</sup> But it seemed that the Shah was determined to leave. At 1.30 p.m. both Russian and British Ministers arrived hastily at the court and held a meeting with the cabinet and discussed the situation. The Allied Ministers were told: "The Shah could not tolerate the presence of foreign troops so close to the Capital and that unless we ordered them to withdraw, His Majesty would leave Tehran at once."<sup>2</sup>

After three hours of debate and discussion, both sides complained about the state of relations between Iran and the Allies; the Allied Ministers especially indicated that the Iranian Government had failed in fulfilling its undertaking against the Germans. They also explained that the Russian troops had no hostile intentions. Meanwhile, both ministers were under pressure by receiving the news that the Shah was about to leave the court or was getting into his carriage. Finally they reached an agreement which was reported by Mr. Marling as follows:

Troops will not advance beyond Kerej and meanwhile the cabinet will be strengthened by the inclusion of Ain-ed-Dowleh and Farman Farma whose presence in it will be a guarantee to us of a policy of benevolent neutrality. As soon as our conversation with the new cabinet for the purpose of agreeing as to the measures required for giving practical effect to this policy has begun, troops are to withdraw from Kerej to Yengi Imam. 3

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1. "One precaution we took to prevent a hasty departure by His Majesty was to remove an essential part of the engine of his motor-car." F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.
  2. Ibid.
  3. F.O. 371-2436. No. 457. Nov. 15, 1915. Decypher Marling.



Later on both ministers had an audience with the Shah. Mr. Marling described the Shah's appearance, as he "was painfully agitated. His usual colour had vanished, and his face and hands constantly twitching, and he had all the appearance of not having slept, as he told us, for four nights."<sup>1</sup> The result of the meeting was satisfactory, but Mr. Marling in his report pointed out that the Shah would definitely leave the capital if the troops did not draw back. He urged his government to approve the arrangement.

#### The Committee of National Defence at Qom

On 3rd Muharram/11th November, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik recommended some of the Democrat members of the Majlis and other high ranking government authorities to go to Qom. They had been instructed to organise a committee to arrange a welcome ceremony for the arrival there of the Shah. On 15th November, everything was ready and the Shah was expected to arrive at any time, but he did not appear, and they were left in absolute frustration. On the evening of the same day, the German Minister arrived in Qom and was welcomed by the committee. The Turkish and Austrian Ministers took up residence in Shāh 'Abd ul-'Azīm, a town a few kilometres to the south of Tehran on the Tehran-Qom road, and they were in touch with the capital. However, the Muhājirīn realised that the Shah had cancelled his journey. It was a great disappointment for them and they wondered how they should deal with the situation. After some meetings between various groups of Muhājirīn on one hand, and their leaders with the German Minister on the other, they decided not to return to the capital. In broadsheets

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

they declared that the Shah had lost all freedom of decision under the Russian bayonets.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it was their duty to unify all the forces in the country to protect the independence and integrity of Iran. The committee immediately set to work and despatched many members of the Majlis and other politicians to provinces and cities to appeal for general support. As it was Muharram, the envoys of the Committee had the best opportunity to preach and to stir up the people against the Russians and British. They asked for the people to support the Committee in Qom. The main task of some of the envoys was to encourage the tribal chiefs to accept their appeal and to join the Muhājirīn. Had the envoys been successful in their mission, the Committee would have received the manpower, arms and considerable assistance from the tribes, which was very vital to the Muhājirīn. Meanwhile, the Germans undertook to pay the expenses. They paid out so much gold that the value of Turkish, British and Egyptian gold coins then in use drastically decreased.

The Committee consisted of members of the Democrat Party and had control over all activities of the Muhājirīn. The members of other parties complained and the German Minister was asked to mediate and deter discord among the parties. Prince Reuss held some meetings. In a session with the leaders of I'tidāliyyūn (the Moderates), Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Khān Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Mīrzā Qāsim Khān Tabrizī and Nāṣir ul-Islām Gīlānī (the editor of "Shūrā"), the matters were discussed and Ṭabāṭabā'ī said that due to the neutrality of Iran, I'tidāliyyūn had not had any connection with the Germans, but now there was no reason to continue that attitude; they could openly have friendly relations. He alluded to the Committee and suggested, as they had

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1. Blücher, 26.



indicated before, that they would like to take part in the organisation. Prince Reuss replied that he had been interested in having friendly relations with the party and from a German point of view there was no difference between the Iranian parties. At any rate, in a common meeting they decided the Committee should consist of four representatives from the parties in the Majlis to take power over the entire organisation. Therefore, Shāhzādah Sulaymān Mīrzā, the leader of the Democrats; Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṣādiq Khān Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the leader of the Moderates; Mudarris, the leader of 'Ilmiyah; and Nizām us-Sulṭān, from the independent members of the Majlis, were appointed. The Committee telegraphed to all provinces and declared its authority and aims to the people and asked for their support. They received a considerable number of replies, especially from those cities where anti-Allied influence was very high. However, due to friction between Tehran and Qom, the Committee did not receive enthusiastic support from all over the country. Kermanshah, Isfahan, Arak, Shiraz and some other cities declared their support for the Committee of Qom. The chiefs of the Sanjābī tribe in the west of Iran announced their men were willing to fight to the last man to defend the country. The 'ulamā' and leaders of Isfahan offered their assistance to the Committee. Shiraz supported the Committee and informed them of anti-British activities in the south.

There was not much time to gather savars from far regions of the country. The Committee endeavoured to receive support from any valuable forces in the central regions, even from rebels. One of the most notorious rebels was Nā'ib Ḥusayn Kāshī and his son Māshā'llāh Khān. This father and son held a vast area of the regions of Kashan under their domination. They fought against the government for a few years.

Şaulat ud-Daulah Bakhtiyārī had been instructed by the government to put an end to the band of Nā'ib Ḥusayn, and had been chasing him for some time. Simultaneously, the Committee of Qom charged Mīrzā Sulaymān Khān Kulūb (known as Maykadah), the assistant to the Prime Minister in the Ministry of the Interior, with contacting Nā'ib Ḥusayn and Māshā'llāh Khān and offering them both a pardon if they joined the national army at Qom and defended the country. It was the best opportunity for them to get rid of Şaulat's pressure; therefore, they accepted the Committee's offer and proceeded to Qom. Māshā'llāh Khān, in his memoirs, mentioned that "In spite of being engaged in war his father decided to join the Nationalists' front and they had to cross a vast area of the central desert" in order to reach Qom as soon as possible. They had a few hundred well-armed and -trained savars.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Roles of the Shah and Mustaufī in the Muhājirat

Aḥmad Shāh changed his mind and agreed to stay in the capital so long as the Russian troops did not advance further and if they would return to Qazvin shortly afterwards. The decision of the Shah produced various opinions. Sykes believed that "The Shah realised the true position of affairs and decided to remain at Capital."<sup>2</sup> due to

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey; Sipīhr, 237-47; Kasravī, 734-45; Ḥallāj, op. cit., 96-97; Samī'ī and Ardalān, op. cit., 20, 62-66; Rizā 'Alī Dīvānbaygī, Safar-i Muhājirat dar Nukhustīn Jang-i Jahānī (Tehran, 1351 H.S.), 5-7; interview with Mr. Muḥammad 'Alī Māfī, the son of Nizām us-Saltānah, acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in the National Government of Kermanshah, see Appendix II; Māshā'llāh Khān, "Khāṭirāt-i Māshā'llāh Khān", "Vahīd", No. 233 (May 1978), 81-82; Ḥusayn Sa'ādatnūrī, "Nā'ib Ḥusayn va Māshā'llāh Khān Kāshī (5)", "Haftagī Vahīd", Fifth Year (new series), no. 5, 18-19; Daulatābādī, III, 291-99.
  2. Sykes, Persia, op. cit., 157.



the threat and advice of the British and Russian Ministers in Tehran. Sipihr thought that the Shah had always had doubts and was not able to make a decision; even on 7th Muḥarram, he preferred to surrender to the enemy than to leave the capital.<sup>1</sup> Bahār considered many reasons for the Shah's decision and believed the reasons were accurate and logical.<sup>2</sup> Some of the Muhājirīn believed the whole incident was a plan to send the radicals out of the capital.

Mustaufī's part in the Muhājirat was very important. It was said that the whole Muhājirat was Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's idea and that whatever he did was good for the country.<sup>3</sup> Kasravī believed Mustaufī was not honest in his plan; he sent out the nationalists, involved them in a war against the Russian forces and himself stayed away from them.<sup>4</sup> Yaḥyā Daulatābādī believed the intention of Mustaufī ul-Mamālik was to prevent the massacre of the nationalists, which would probably have happened if the Russian troops had entered Tehran, as had occurred in Tabriz in 1330/1911.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Marling reported in December that:

We have since learnt that practically only four of his many councillors really exerted themselves to dissuade the Shah from quitting his capital, namely, Kamran Mirza, Farman Farma, Mustaufi-el-Mamelek, and Sahib Bakhtiar [? Ikhtiyār], and that among the most active to urge him to go were Mohtashem-us-Sultaneh, Serdar Bahadur, Bakhtiarai (-), Moin-el-Vizareh, and Mustasha-ed-Dowleh [Mustashār ud-Daulah]. 6

#### Reorganisation of the Cabinet

The Iranian Government became absolutely powerless and left everything to the Allied Ministers' decision. On 16th November, both the

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1. Sipihr, 237.

2. Bahār, op. cit., 20.

3. Kasravī, 641.

4. Ibid.

5. Daulatābādī, III, 292.

6. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

British and Russian Ministers were invited to the court for a reorganisation of the cabinet. They were asked to take part directly in the session for appointment of ministers. Mr. Marling reported that "The president said that Ministers, including himself, unreservedly placed their portfolios at our disposal."<sup>1</sup> 'Ayn ud-Daulah was suggested as Prime Minister and Farmān Farmā as Minister of the Interior.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the fact that the Allied Ministers insisted that 'Ayn ud-Daulah accept the position, he nevertheless refused, but finally agreed to enter the cabinet without portfolio. The Allied Ministers realised that there would be a problem if they suggested Farmān Farmā for the post of Prime Minister. He had been well-known as a strong pro-Allied supporter, particularly of the Russians, and had gained the hatred of the nationalists and pro-Germans during the past six months. There was also the possibility that some of the ministers would resign as soon as he took the position.<sup>3</sup> Farmān Farmā was not the Shah's favourite choice at the time. The Allied Ministers' conclusion was that the best and most suitable choice at that time would be to retain Mustaufī ul-Mamālik in his position. They were also able to get the post of Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior for Akbar Mīrzā, the son of Zill us-Sulṭān. Consequently, the Allies' influence grew considerably in the cabinet.

#### The Capital after the Muhājirat

The procession of Muhājirīn who left Tehran continued for two days more. The streets of the capital were deserted. There was no trans-

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1. Ibid.

2. Daulatābādī, 295, reported that Farmān Farmā was appointed Minister for the Interior, but without authority over the west and south of Iran.

3. Even after his appointment as Minister of the Interior, Mr. Marling reported: "Swedish officer commanding Gendarmerie had flatly refused to obey orders of the Minister of Interior ... we are trying to obtain his dismissal." F.O. 371-2437. No. 462. Nov. 17, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.



portation left in the city; the Muhājirīn used every available one in order to leave Tehran. " ... a very perceptible percentage of the inhabitants of Tehran had disappeared."<sup>1</sup> The bāzār and shops were still closed. In spite of the agreement between the Iranian Government and the Allies that the troops would not appear in the capital, the city remained in an intensive atmosphere for a few days and even the government and court were ready to move out of the capital at any moment.

No newspapers were published for a week. On 21st November, "Ra'd" published an issue and the editorial was full of compliments to the Shah and the Prime Minister for being so patient and praised them for their endeavouring to seek a solution for the crisis in the country. The newspapers reported the events of the past seven days and commented on the day of Muhājirat, 15th November. The writer believed "it was an unforgettable day ... such an event in the past and present history of Iran was unique."<sup>2</sup>

"'Aṣr-i Jadīd", in their editorial, approved the decision of the Shah and government and considered that it would have been a great mistake if the Shah and government had left the capital. Another important point which the writer alluded to was the gendarmerie; he criticised its administration, which had caused the gendarmerie's interference in the political affairs of the country. Finally he concluded that the existence of the force was harmful for the country."<sup>3</sup>

The Russian newspapers showed two completely different attitudes towards the Iranian Government before and after 15th November. Before the day of the Muhājirat, they were talking about a military expedition

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

2. "Ra'd", No. 41, Nov. 21, 1915/Muharram 13, 1334.

3. "'Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 25, Nov. 23, 1915/Muharram 15, 1334.

in Iran and recommended that the Allies should give the Iranian Government a severe lesson.

"Ruski Slov", in an article titled "Eastern Peril", wrote:

A severe lesson inflicted on the Persians would operate beneficially in the entire Near East, where only force is respected. Hesitation or indulgence with the Persian authorities who have betrayed the trust reposed in them, would simply be calculated to create a new danger for England and Russia in the Middle East. 1

The writer had urged his government to give the commander-in-chief of the "Anglo-Russian expedition in Persia" and the Allied Ministers freedom of action in Iran.

After 15th November the attitude of Russian newspapers towards the Shah and his government changed completely. Their reports indicated the improvement of the state of relations between Iran and the Allies. They also stated that there was the possibility of an agreement to be concluded between Iran and the Allies very soon. The inclusion in the cabinet of 'Ayn ud-Daulah, who was one of the "sincere partisans of Russia", and Farmān Farmā, "the second partisan of Russia and England"<sup>2</sup>, was interpreted by the Russian press as an increase in Allied influence in Iran. The capital, from the Russian press' point of view, was quiet and had come to life again. They reported that Farmān Farmā had already taken some strong measures against pro-Germans in the capital. They believed the gendarmerie forces were taking orders from the Germans and they were the only cause of the disturbances in Iran.<sup>3</sup>

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1. "Ruski Slov", quoted in "The Times", Nov. 16, 1915.

2. I.F.O., C. 63, f. 7, No. 1, "Ruski Slov", Nov. 8/21, 1915, No. 857.

3. "Novoye Vremya", Nov. 9/22, 1915, I.F.O., C. 63, f. 2., No. 4;  
"Ruski Slov", Nov. 8/21, 1915, I.F.O., C. 63, f. 7, No. 1.



The British newspapers suddenly became very interested in Iranian affairs. News and commentaries on Iran filled some pages of the press. Members of Parliament also kept questioning the Secretary and Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs about Iran. All the incidents in the past few months were rapidly revealed in the press. In fact, as "The Near East" commentator wrote, "the British Government appeared to have adopted the attitude that the less said about Persia the better." Now it was time for a change in the British Government's attitude towards Iran; therefore, the British Government, in an official statement about the current events in Iran, hinted that there was no need for the silence about Iran to continue any longer. "The Near East" had a comment on Iran and referred to the Russian newspapers' reports about an "Anglo-Russian expedition in Persia" and rejected the whole idea. The writer claimed that the British forces had withdrawn from the south of Iran after the Iranian Government had managed to take control of the region. The force in Bushire was there only to support the Mesopotamian front. He believed that the British military forces in the south of Iran could hardly be considered in harmony with the Russian military operation in the north. The writer then alluded to all incidents which had happened to Allied subjects in the past few months and added that due to the lack of any measures being taken for the safety of the Allied Legations in Tehran by the Iranian Government, the Russian forces at Qazvin approached Tehran "as the only means of giving protection" to the legations in case of disturbances. The writer tried to prove that the Russians had no ill intentions against the Iranian people and referred to the Russian proclamation in Tehran, but there was somehow a change in the proclamation. "Russia has decided, in agreement with the government

of the Shah, to put an end to these activities in the interests of the good relations between two countries." There was no evidence that there was a secret agreement between the Iranian Government and the Russians, for the proclamation which was issued in Tehran did not contain anything which indicated that the Iranian Government had agreed to the Russian advance on Tehran. The writer was well aware of the Iranian attitude towards the Allies and from his point of view "the real Persian problem turns largely on Persia's grievances against our Ally [Russia]." The writer left no doubt that there might have been a change in British policy towards Iran; on the contrary, he believed the Russians had modified their attitude towards Iran, otherwise "If we did not believe that Russia of to-day was very differently minded from the Russia that Persians know, we should not choose this moment for referring to the subject." Although the writer admitted that there had been many maltreatments by the Russians in Iran, he believed that the Russian Government had no knowledge of these actions in Iran and blamed the stubbornness of the Russian diplomats and agents, who acted independently. Consequently, they created a feeling of enmity in the Iranian people against the Russians, which was used by the Turks and Germans to increase their influence in the country. The writer warned the Allies that the situation would grow worse if they did not consider the Iranian opinion and suggested that it would be better to suspend the idea of "spheres of influence" in Iran and the British Government should use its influence to improve the relations between Russia and Iran.<sup>1</sup>

"The Times" also commented on the situation in Iran and the advance of Russian forces to Tehran. The writer stated that "It is satisfactory

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1. "The Near East", Nov. 19, 1915.



to see that the Allies do not intend to allow German intrigues to have the easy success in Persia which they have achieved in the Balkans." The writer referred to the German and Turkish activities against the British and Russians in Iran and the inability or unwillingness of the Iranian Government to prevent them. The writer believed that "England and Russia have shown great patience in their dealings with this feeble and untrustworthy administration." He alluded to the attempts on the lives of British and Russian subjects in Iran and stated that it was time to prevent more incidents and stop "murderous attacks upon our [British] consuls and their staff." He concluded that:

The warning addressed to Persia by Russia and England and supported by the movement of the Russian troops from Kazvin will suffice to open the eyes of responsible Persians to the danger of playing with German incitements to hostility. 1

#### Tehran-Qom Relations

The Iranian Government apparently did not expect that there would be friction between Qom and Tehran. It was assumed that if the Central Powers' Ministers, particularly Germany's, returned to the capital, the members of the Majlis and other nationalists would also return to Tehran. Therefore, the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs despatched a telegram and asked Prince Reuss to return to Tehran. The German Minister replied that he preferred to stay at Qom.<sup>2</sup> At the first step, the Iranian Government faced great difficulties in persuading the German Minister to come back to Tehran.

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1. "The Times", Nov. 16, 1915.

2. Sipih, 240.

On 22nd November the Iranian Government informed the governors of provinces and the foreign legations in Tehran and the Central Powers' Ministers in Shāh 'Abd ul-'Azīm and Qom that the Russian troops had withdrawn from Karaj and the Shah no longer had any intention of leaving the capital.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously the German Minister received a telegram from the Iranian Foreign Minister:

Due to Your Excellency's mission at the court of His Imperial Majesty, it is necessary to return to the capital immediately. It is believed that Your Excellency's assistance will have extraordinary value to Germany and Iran in Tehran and will have more benefit in Tehran than in Qom ... Concerning the present difficulties and obstacles, you will disregard some personal concerns and will agree with our view. 2

The German Minister, in replying to the Iranian Minister, stated that:

The reason for my departure from Tehran was the imminent occupation of the capital by the enemy force and official announcement of Your Excellency that His Imperial Majesty would leave Tehran.

The perils of the occupation of the capital by the Russian forces have not been reduced and it is obvious that the enemy of the German Government can occupy Tehran in a few hours at any time which they want. 3

The German Minister believed his return to the capital would cause the Allies to occupy Tehran. He expressed his regret that he was obliged to postpone his return to the capital until he was sure of his safety there. He informed the Iranian Government that the Russian forces intended to breach all communications between Tehran and the western part of Iran. In a continuation of the telegraphic

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1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 90, No. 26. dated Muharram 14, 1334, No. 4414; Sipih, 246.
  2. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 90, No. 42. dated Nov. 15, 1915; Sipih, 252.
  3. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 90, No. 40. dated Dec. 1, 1915; Sipih, 252.



communication between Tehran and Qom, the Iranian Government insisted on its demand and informed the German Minister that the government had made some inquiries in Berlin. Prince Reuss, in rather strong language to the Iranian Government, stated that the Iranian Government had confessed to the Austrian Minister that the government was unable to guarantee their safety and it was better for them to keep their confidential documents and archives somewhere safe.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, the Iranian Government asked the 'ulamā' and members of the Majlis to return to the capital. Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabaṭābā'ī, the most famous leader of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, received a telegram from Mustaufī ul-Mamālik, asking him to return with his companions to Tehran. The Prime Minister notified him that due to winter, the Muhājirīn would create difficulties for the inhabitants of Qom.<sup>2</sup> Ṭabaṭābā'ī replied that they would return as soon as he was informed by the Prime Minister that the government's diplomatic activities had had some results in favour of the country.<sup>3</sup> Two days later, Mustaufī ul-Mamālik informed Ṭabaṭābā'ī and the members of the Majlis that diplomatic negotiations were in progress and he was hoping to achieve a satisfactory conclusion. The Prime Minister also complained about current activities in Qom, which he believed were contrary to the government's intentions and had produced many difficulties for the government in receiving favourable results in its negotiations with the Allies. The Prime Minister repeated his appeal to Ṭabaṭābā'ī to return to the capital.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the Majlis also despatched a telegram to the members of the Majlis, that it was necessary that all the

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1. Sipīhr, 252.

2. Ibid., 246, 247.

3. Ibid., 249.

4. Ibid., 250.

members be present in the capital to discuss the country's affairs.<sup>1</sup>  
 The Committee replied that they would not return to the capital unless the government's diplomatic activities produced satisfactory results. They indicated that as long as the Russian troops had not withdrawn, they would not be able to fulfill their duties.<sup>2</sup>

### The Irano-Allied Alliance

In spite of the fact that the Shah changed his mind and remained in the capital, there was still a possibility that he would leave Tehran at any time. He was very nervous because there was no sign of the Russian troops withdrawing from Karaj. The Russian Minister in Tehran had frequent meetings with the Shah and assured him that the troops would definitely withdraw from Karaj shortly. The rapid assurances by the Russian Minister soothed the Shah's excitement. The Iranian Government also expected the withdrawal of the Russian troops, which would reduce panic in the capital, and the government would have a chance to settle its problems.

On the other hand, the Russian Minister in Tehran faced a great difficulty because the Grand Duke refused to instruct the troops to withdraw and believed they should remain at Karaj until the Iranian Government was able to control the situation and the Allied Ministers were able to fulfill their duties without disturbances. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs advocated the decision by the Grand Duke and stated that the Russian Government "had decided not to withdraw Russian troops from Keredj in any case until a Persian Government

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1. Sipih, 251.

2. Ibid.



affording satisfactory guarantee for future is actually formed."<sup>1</sup>

This attitude of the Russian Government put their minister at Tehran in a very embarrassing position. He confessed that if the Grand Duke did not modify his decision, he would have no alternative but to resign. Mr. Marling urged his government to ask the Russian Government to reconsider their decision. At last the Russian Government agreed to a gradual withdrawal of the troops from Karaj to Yangī Imām. The minister in Tehran believed that the attitude of the Iranian Government was satisfactory, for they had agreed to allow 100 Russian soldiers to come to the capital to protect the legations. The Shah also expressed his most friendly attitude towards both powers and stated that he wished to visit Russia after the war. The Shah and his government indicated that they believed Iran should have a definite policy and ought to join one side or the other in the war; but they preferred to join the Allies and declare war against Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

The Iranian Government assumed that there was an opportunity to receive a better deal with the Allies. In spite of all the crises, the situation for an agreement in favour of Iran seemed probable. The Germans had lavishly promised arms, money and forces. The situation in Mesopotamia from a military point of view, particularly around Baghdad, was not very successful. Except for the advance of the Russian troops towards Tehran, the Allies had not made a great impression on Iranian public opinion. The Allied Ministers realised the importance of the situation and warned their governments that if the inducement of the Central Powers attracted the Iranian Government

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1. F.O. 371-2437. No. 1705. Nov. 17, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd; F.O. 371-2437. No. 1717. Nov. 18, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.

2. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

to join them, Mesopotamia would be in danger and they would be able to create problems in the Caucasus too. It was probable that the Central Powers could afford to despatch armies to Iran but at least by sending officers and arms, they would be capable of organising armies from Iranian levies. These armies would definitely be used against the British in Mesopotamia and Afghanistan. Mr. Marling also alluded to the importance of India and expressed his opinion that it was advisable to keep Iran on the Allies' side. He anticipated that the demands of the Iranian Government for an alliance with the Allies would possibly be the six points in the proposal for benevolent neutrality and 100,000 rifles and 200 guns, plus British and Russian officers to command the artillery. The Iranian Government also would ask for support against Turkey in case of an invasion of Iran. Mr. Marling reckoned the advantages of an Irano-Allied alliance would not only outweigh the disadvantages which were mentioned, it would also jeopardise German propaganda in Iran. Mr. Marling believed the main demands of the Iranian Government would be economic and political. Later on, he did not find it necessary to assist Iran with arms and officers. He hoped that the British Government would authorise him to open negotiations with the Iranian Government. He added that if the Iranian Government's demands were undesirable they could stop negotiations at any time and at least the Allies would "gain time".<sup>1</sup> The Indian Viceroy in the Persian Gulf considered the Irano-Allied alliance as most desirable, if it would not provide "unduly extravagant political conditions." They believed that it

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1. F.O. 371-2435. No. 472. Nov. 22, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.



... would produce a good moral effect upon Mohammadian public opinion in India and tend to remove bad effect created by our war with Turkey. It would greatly reduce risk of any breach with Afghanistan and Persia. It should make pipeline secure and render it possible to reduce our forces on Karun. 1

The Russian Government confessed that it was impossible for the Russians to supply arms and officers for Iran at that time; otherwise, they completely agreed to an alliance with the Iranian Government. The Russians believed the Iranian proposals should by no means be rejected. They indicated that the Iranian Government must be offered substantial privileges to attract them to the Allied side. The Russians recommended that the past promises of Iranian possession of the holy cities of Najaf and Karbalā' be kept, which would make a great change in public opinion in Iran.<sup>2</sup>

The British Government was also unable to afford sufficient military assistance to submit to Iran. On the other hand, the question of the two holy cities was undesirable. The viceroy indicated that it would irritate the sharīf of Mecca and the Arabs in Mesopotamia. They believed the British should "keep Mesopotamia out of bargain."<sup>3</sup>

The Indian Government had a pessimistic opinion of the Iranian Government's proposal. They considered that the change in the Iranian Government's attitude was only due to the Russian troops' advance on Tehran and it might continue so long as the government believed that "the strength of Allies exceeds that of their enemies in Persia."<sup>4</sup>

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1. F.O. 371-2437. (P 4328). From viceroy, Nov. 24, 1915. F.O. and repeated to Tehran.
  2. F.O. 371-2436. No. 2703. Nov. 17, 1915. Decypher Buchanan. Petrograd.
  3. F.O. 371-2437. No. 431. Nov. 28, 1915. From viceroy.
  4. F.O. 371-2437. Indian Government. P. 4303. Immediate. India Office, Whitehall, London. 23 Nov. 1915.

The Government of India believed the declaration of war against Turkey by the Iranian Government was of little value to the Allies. The Government of India stated that if the Iranian Government showed determination to take strong measures against Germany and its allies and enacted some steps, such as the deportation of the Central Powers' Ministers, disarming the gendarmerie and dismissing Swedish officers, the Government of India would have no disagreement to an Irano-Allied alliance.<sup>1</sup>

However, the British Government instructed Mr. Marling to open negotiations with the Iranian Government and recommended to him that "if it is impossible to keep Mesopotamia out of the discussion you should be careful to limit your language."<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward Grey desired the Ministers in Tehran to induce the Iranian Government to ask the Russians to suppress the gendarmerie. It seemed the Iranian Government had done whatever they could to satisfy the Allies. Marling stated: "I am very unwilling to embarrass the Government at the present with any demands that would humiliate them and see unfriendly ..."<sup>3</sup>

#### Anti-Allied Domination of Hamadan

The situation in Hamadan had remained critical. The Cossacks had fortified Muşallā and the gendarmes and pro-Germans controlled the city. There was an intensive atmosphere over the city. It was expected that at any moment a clash would occur between the two forces. The Iranian Cossack forces had been reinforced by the arrival of 240 Iranian Cossacks from Tabriz. It was estimated that the total numbers

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 371-2437. No. 432. Dec. 2, 1915. F.O. Decypher to Marling.

3. F.O. 371-2437. No. 476. Nov. 22, 1915. Decypher Marling. Tehran.



of Iranian Cossacks were over 500, plus 40 Russian soldiers in Hamadan; the latter group were for the protection of the Russian Consulate. The pro-Germans also received support from Kermanshah and the gendarmes were reinforced from the regions of Burūjird and Qazvin. By this time, 2,000 gendarmes were at Hamadan. The inhabitants of the city were in an absolute panic. They anticipated that there would be a "brother-killing" fight between the Cossacks and gendarmes. From the beginning of Muḥarram, the anti-Allied groups had the best opportunity to stir up the people's sentiments against the Allies, particularly the Russians. In the mosques, all over the city, mullahs in their speeches described the Russian forces' brutalities in the occupied cities of the country. They reminded the people of the 'Āshūrā of 1330 in Tabriz and the bombardment of Imām Riḏā's shrine in Mashhad and so on. In a report from Hamadan to the British Legation in Tehran, the occasion of an assembly in a mosque was reported. In the report, the occasion had been considered as purely propaganda in which a preacher who claimed that he had come from Mashhad made a speech, telling the crowd about the Russian brutalities in Khurasan. He took out a woman's chādur which had been torn and bloodied and showed it to the people, saying:

This is a yād-i-gār [reminder] of the way the Russians have treated and are still treating our women in every province where Russians exist. This is how you may expect your women of Hamadan to be treated when the Russians ..., arrive here. How long, brothers, are we to remain under the heel of such a monster? 1

There was speculation that Allied subjects would be massacred on the day of 'Āshūrā. The Allied Consuls were advised by the governor to leave the city. The consuls did not wish to repeat the

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1. F.O. 371-2438. Copy. 194587. Hamadan, Nov. 17, 1915. to F.O.

Kermanshah incident, when they had left the city and were not allowed to return. Therefore they tried to stay as long as possible. They took precautions by destroying their archives and confidential documents. The Imperial Bank had sent away as much of its treasury as they could. Due to the interference of some of the 'ulamā' of Hamadan, who deterred any disturbances in the city, the day of 'Āshūrā passed rather quietly without serious incident.

The news from Tehran created an uncompromisable state between the two forces in Hamadan: the Russian forces' advance to Tehran, the exodus of members of the Majlis and nationalists, the organisation of the Committee of National Defence in Qom, the proclamation of the Committee which informed the cities that the Shah and government in Tehran were powerless and unable to take any decision, the subsequent claims by the Committee that it was responsible for the country's affairs and had declared war on the Russians. On the other hand the Russians despatched 200 men to Hamadan. The Russian Minister in Tehran was asked by the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs to stop the advance of the Russian troops towards Hamadan, which would increase the gravity of the situation in the city and the government's difficulties in finding a solution for the problem of Hamadan. The Russian Minister stated that the advance was a military action without his knowledge; besides, he had received information that the Russian subjects were in danger. The anti-Allied groups in Hamadan understood that they should not delay any longer and were set to bring about the final operation.

The Russian Consul realised that the situation was indeed critical and despatched the Russian families to Qazvin. The Iranian Commander of the Cossacks in the city indicated that the Allies could not rely



on the Cossacks because public opinion was against them and mullahs were preaching against the Russians all over the city. The Iranian commander of gendarmes, Major Muḥammad Taqī Khān Pasiyān, had been many times in contact with the Cossack commanders for a union or peaceful surrender; in the latter case, they would be allowed to leave the city. The Cossack commanders refused to accept the gendarmes' demands and left no alternative but a conflict. From early morning on 22nd November 1915, Muṣallā, where the Cossacks were located, was surrounded by gendarmes and pro-German savars. Around two o'clock in the morning both sides kept each other under fire. The fight did not last long and finally the Cossacks were surrounded and disarmed. Some of them joined the gendarmes and the rest were allowed to leave the city for Qazvin. The total casualties of the conflict were not more than ten men. It was said that the gendarmes used a tactic to approach the Cossack fortifications in Muṣallā. They were wearing Muḥarram ceremonial clothes and proceeded towards Muṣallā in a procession. It was considered by the Cossack guards as a normal procession for Muḥarram by the inhabitants of the city; they assumed that the procession was coming to hold a ceremony there. When the Cossacks realised the truth, it was too late. After a brief fight the Cossacks were surrounded and disarmed. Some Allied reports indicated the Cossacks had been bribed by the Germans.

It seemed the Russian soldiers did not take part in the fighting and through the governor's mediation, it was arranged that if the Russians surrendered their arms and ammunition, they would be allowed to leave the city immediately. The Allied Consuls understood that the governor was powerless and could do nothing for their protection.

They tried to contact the Swedish officer Major Kaellstrom, but failed. The Swedish officers informed the Allied Consuls that if they did not leave the city by the following day, he could not guarantee their safety. The gendarmes controlled the city, occupied the Imperial Bank and took possession of 138,000 tūmāns left in the treasury. The Allied Consuls were promised that there would be no maltreatment but they had to leave the city by the day after. The Russian and British colonies had no alternative but to leave the city and a few days later safely arrived at Qazvin. The incident was a great privilege for the pro-Germans and an advantage to the Committee of National Defence in Qom.

The Iranian Government was absolutely powerless. Its authority did not extend beyond the capital. The news of a coup in Shiraz and the domination of the gendarmerie over Hamadan, was followed by another similar incident in Arāk (Sulṭānābād). The anti-Allied groups took over the city. On 24th November, the situation became critical. The British Consul and colony had to leave the city and the Imperial Bank was occupied by the groups. Subsequent incidents in other cities such as Kerman and Yazd indicated the fall of the Iranian Government's authority in the country. The government was horrified; it informed all the cities that Iran was not at war with the Allies, but in fact the government had very friendly relations with Russia and Britain.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For events in Hamadan, see: Rizāqulī Qā'immaqāmī, Vaqā'i' Gharb-i Īrān dar Jang-i Jahānī-yi Avval (Arak, n.d.), 65-67; Parviz Afsar, Tārikh-i Zhāndārmī-yi Īrān (Qom, 1332 H.S.), 129-31; I.F.O., C. 37, f. 27, No. 23. 1334 H.Q. dated Muharram 12, 1334; F.O. 371-2724. Comp. No. 1. Nov. 30, 1914. Patrick Cowan to Marling; F.O. 371-2724. Kazvin, Nov. 30, 1915. McDouall to Marling.



American and German-Turkish Interests in Tehran

The American Legation in Tehran, after accepting requests to protect German and Turkish interests in Iran, informed the Iranian Government and the Allied Legations in Tehran that "The United States has taken charge of German and Turkish interests in those parts of North Persia in occupation of Russian troops."<sup>1</sup> This statement was a matter of great embarrassment to the Allied Governments. Mr. Caldwell, the American Minister in Tehran, received replies from the Allied Legations, stating that they refused to recognise the protection by any neutral country of German and Turkish interests in Iran while the Iranian Government was at peace with its government.<sup>2</sup> The Spanish Legation, which had taken charge of Austrian interests in Iran, received a similar reply. Grey instructed Marling to send a strong reply to the United States, stating:

... There has been no rupture of relations between the Persian Government and the Government of Germany and Turkey, I am at a loss to understand why German and Turkish interests in certain localities in Northern Persia should be entrusted to the care of a Representative other than those accredited by the two above-named countries to the Persian Government. The presence of Russian troops in certain localities of Northern Persia is not of recent date, as you are well aware, and their presence at the present time and their necessary reinforcement are all the more essential in view of the agitation which has been actively propagated and stimulated by German agents and their Allies and which have resulted in several most serious outrages in various parts of Persia. The presence of Russian troops is solely with the object of protecting foreign lives and properties against the dangers which were and are menacing them; and the Persian Government are under

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1. F.O. 371-2438. No. 460. Nov. 16, 1915. Tehran. Decypher Marling. Tehran.
  2. File no. 7 04.6291/10. Nov. 24, 1915. Tehran. Caldwell to Secretary of State, quoted in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement. The World War (Washington, 1928), 995-996.

no misapprehension in regard to the justifiable purpose for which these troops have been strengthened and placed in a position to render immediate aid and protection when required. I am consequently instructed to inform you that I regret being unable to accept the announcement which you have made to me. 1

London and Petrograd, through diplomatic channels in Washington, complained about the attitude of the American Legation in Tehran. The British authorities considered the United States responsible only for the buildings and archives of the German and Turkish Legations in Tehran.<sup>2</sup>

However, after the official announcement by the Iranian Government that the Shah and government would not leave the capital, the United States Legation in Tehran informed the Iranian Government:

I have the honour to notify you today at 12 noon the German Legation and interests at Tehran were taken from my charge. The American flag has been taken down ... The German interests are in German hands in Tehran. 3

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1. F.O. 371-2438. No. 298. F.O., Nov. 18, 1915. to Marling.
  2. F.O. 371-2438. Nov. 23, 1915. to Grey.
  3. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 90, No. 46. dated Nov. 27, 1915.



## CHAPTER III

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF KERMANSHAH

#### The Germans' Plan in Iran

From the end of October to the middle of November 1915, the Central Powers' influence was at its apex in Iran; even the Allied Ministers expected to see a pro-German Government replace the present one and to declare war against the Allies. After 15th November, the situation became very complicated. Neither the Iranian Government and Muhājirīn nor the Allies and Central Powers had any concept of what the next step would be. From the Germans' point of view, although the situation changed and they lost their influence in the capital and the Shah and government inclined towards the Allies, the basic plans of the Germans were, nevertheless, still feasible.

From the military point of view, the appointment of Field Marshal von der Goltz Pasha as the commander of the Sixth Turkish Army was of great importance to military and political conditions in Mesopotamia and Iran. He was in charge of all military operations concerning the provinces of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra as well as Iran and Afghanistan. All assistance from Germany or Turkey, whether troops, officers, money, arms or ammunition, were under his supervision. Von der Goltz Pasha would also be informed of diplomatic activities in these regions.<sup>1</sup> Field Marshal von der Goltz Pasha believed that the name "Sixth Army" sounded well as it was under the

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1. Gehrke, I, pp. 190-91.

command of a German field marshal, but in fact there were not many troops. Moreover, it was a heterogeneous army of Arabs, Turks, and local tribes and, of course, not well trained. Concerning the situation of the war in Europe, General von der Goltz was well aware that the Germans could not afford an expedition into Iran and the Turks had no better capability at the time. Although the Germans had planned to organise three armies in Khurasan, Azarbaijan and at the Karun River, in the south-west, from native forces and volunteers under the command of German officers<sup>1</sup>, due to the changes in the situation in Iran, there was no ground for the Germans to achieve their plan. Von der Goltz Pasha modified the Germans' plan according to the situation. His main target in Iran was the west and south of the country; due to the Germans' activities, the situation in those parts was absolutely in favour of the Germans; therefore, it was desirable to form two armies in the south-west and west of Iran. Wassmuss had been preparing the means to co-ordinate the interests of Iran and Germany in the south-west. He had been in contact with most of the tribal chiefs and built up friendly relations. He also had the full support of the nationalists in the south. Wassmuss, at any rate, was incredibly successful; if the Germans were able to send officers and furnish the tribes with arms, the tribes would be capable of a serious threat to Mesopotamia and the British forces in the south.

In the west, German influence had great advantages in every political, military and strategical aspect. It had been predicted that the Russian forces would attack Baghdad. Von der Goltz' plan was to organise another army from the western Iranian tribes and

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1. F.O. 371-2436. No. 324. F.O., Oct. 22, 1915. Decypher to Marling.



native volunteers to prevent the invasion of Baghdad by Russian troops. Count Kanitz, the German military attaché in Iran, had been charged with preparing the means of organising the army in the west. He had been in contact with the chiefs of tribes and influential leaders in the western provinces. The German Consulates in the cities were very active for this purpose and they employed armed men and were in touch with the tribal chiefs regularly.

From a political point of view, by 15th November, the Germans' hope to bring the Shah and his government to their side, had vanished. The incident was a serious defeat to German policy in Iran, which caused the German Minister, Prince Reuss, to be recalled to Berlin. The German envoys used their utmost abilities to prevent the total collapse of German policy in Iran. In fact they still had the support of the majority of the people, particularly the members of the Majlis, nationalists, 'ulamā', gendarmerie forces and tribal chiefs. The Germans were well aware that the only chance for keeping up the German influence in Iran was through the Committee of Qom; therefore, they determined to assist the Committee by all means to enable it to take form as a provisional government. This government would have to call for a general uprising against the Allies. They would attack Tehran in order to release the Shah and government, which were not free to take any decision. The provisional government should have a regular administration to attract the Iranian people's sympathy and to maintain security and justice. A well-organised system would deter the opposition from calling the provisional government anarchist. The provisional government should take charge of all the country's affairs.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Gehrke, II, 323-24.

When the news of an alliance between the British and Russian Governments and Iranian Government was released, the Germans despatched a note of warning to the Iranian Government, that in case of an alliance between Iran and the Allies, Iran would have the same fate as Serbia and Belgium when the German troops invaded India.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, a proclamation was issued by the Germans on 20th December 1915:

I, the minister and extraordinary envoy of Germany, am authorised by my Government to declare to Persian people at large the following facts:

As Russia and England, the traditional enemies of the Mohammedan nations and the whole East, are being beaten by the gallant German armies and her allies, now the occasion is most favourable for the oppressed nation of Persia to rise against her enemies and do their duty for the salvation of their country.

Germany is struggling not only for the safety of her own country, which was menaced by her jealous foes, but also for the liberation of the Eastern countries. Now her armies are fighting the enemies of Islam shoulder to shoulder with the armies of Turkey who are the defendents of the Holy places of the Mohammedans.

As Russia and England openly have intended to struggle all the Mohammedan Kingdoms, occupied a large part of Persian soil, and reduced the rights of independence of this country to what are known to all; therefore it is now the best chance and last opportunity for the oppressed Persian people to move and regain her complete independence and integrity.

I declare to the Persian people that Germany will help them in every way in their struggle for the salvation of their Fatherland and will guaranty the future independence and integrity of Persia, if the Persians join hands with Germany and her allies. I have the arms, ammunitions, officers and money enough ready to offer to Persia, when she decides to do only her national and religious duties against her enemies.

The above declaration is made in perfect harmony and with the full support of our allies, Austria and Turkey. 2

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1. Miroshnikov, op. cit., 50.

2. Gehrke, II, 325.



### Deadlock of Tehran-Qom Negotiations

The National Committee of Qom widely publicised its attitude of opposition, that not only did the Muhājirīn not revolt against the Shah and government, but in fact they were determined to release them from the Allied yoke. They repeatedly announced their submission and obedience to the Shah. The basic point of the Committee's propaganda for a general uprising against Russian troops was the freedom of the Shah and the independence of the country.

Meanwhile, the government desperately tried to find a solution to the disagreement between Tehran and Qom. Arbāb Kaykhusrau, the Zoroastrian deputy in the Majlis, went to Qom as the government's representative to negotiate the problems and, if possible, to persuade them to return to Tehran. The negotiations resulted in total disappointment. Arbāb Kaykhusrau returned to Tehran in the company of one member of the Majlis. He was Bahār, the editor of the newspaper "Naubahār", who had had one of his hands broken in an accident and had come back to Tehran for treatment.

On 2nd December, the Committee despatched a mission to the capital for further negotiations with the government. In a meeting with the Prime Minister, they expressed the Committee's view about the situation of the country. The Prime Minister replied that the reasons for the Muhājirat had now disappeared and he could hardly believe it would happen again. He added that if the members of the Majlis desired that the Russian troops completely withdraw from Iranian territory under those circumstances, it was impossible. The Prime Minister complained about the difficulties which the Muhājirīn had created for the government. He stated that the government could

not take any decision without consulting the Majlis and receiving the members' approval. He apointed out that there was the matter of the independence and the future of the country and if the members of the Majlis in Qom insisted on maintaining their present attitude, he would have no choice but to resign. In that case, concerning the state of affairs, it might have disastrous consequences for the country.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Mustashār ud-Daulah, the Minister for Post and Telegraph, held a completely opposite opinion to the Prime Minister; in a letter to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the leader of the Moderate Party, he bitterly complained about the state of affairs and the government's policy. Without mentioning any names, he criticised the Prime Minister for his hesitation to take any decision and blamed him for leading the country and people to a state of annihilation. He stated that the recent inclination of the government towards the Allies, contrary to general desire, had gone beyond expectation and if some persons had not taken action against the government's intentions, a treaty of alliance between Iran and the Allies would have been signed on 6th December. Mustashār ud-Daulah expressed his pity that the Democrats were still supporting the Prime Minister. He recommended Ṭabāṭabā'ī to take a risk and follow the policy already implemented at Qom and if they died at least it would be for the country.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Āvaj Front

The crisis in Hamadan caused General Bartof to despatch a force consisting of 300 men towards Hamadan in order to protect the Russian

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1. Sipīhr, 259-60.

2. Ibid., 266.



and British Consuls and colonies in the city; but the Russian troops met the consuls and colonies on their way to Qazvin. The Qazvin-Hamadan road crossed through a chain of mountains which, from a military point of view, possessed a very important strategical location; particularly, Sulṭān Bulāgh pass (8,000 ft.) was a vital point. The road through the mountains was called Āvaj (Āvah), which is a village on the same road, 111 km from Qazvin and 118 km from Hamadan. The pass was situated on the road a few kilometres from Āvaj towards Hamadan.

The Russian troops had approached as far as Razan, a village 84 km north-east of Hamadan on the Hamadan-Qazvin road. It was said that at that time a considerable number of gendarmes and savars were concentrated at Hamadan. About 30th November, a confrontation occurred between the Russian troops and a detachment of gendarmes; the Russians withdrew 34 km, as far as Āvaj, and left the pass in the hands of the opposition.

It was considered a national victory and the Committee at Qom celebrated the occasion. It was also an encouraging incident which created a sensation and brought enthusiasm from the people. Mr. Marling criticised the Russians for having 10,000 men at Qazvin and "tamely [allowing] her consul to be driven out from Hamadan."<sup>1</sup> On 3rd December a force of 4,000 Russian troops approach Hamadan from Qazvin. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that 10,000 men would take part in that operation. There were 500 gendarmes and in addition to them 1200 savars. The pass was the main battlefield between the two forces. In spite of superiority in both numbers and

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 157. Tehran, Dec. 5, 1915. Marling to Grey.

arms, the Russian troops faced a strong stand by the National Army. After several occasions of heavy fighting the National Army had to withdraw towards Hamadan. Although they faced the Russians near Hamadan once more, they did not last long and had to retreat to Hamadan and immediately evacuated the city in two divisions, one to the Asadābād pass and the other towards Malāyir. The news of the National Army's defeat at Sulṭān Bulāgh caused a horrible panic in Hamadan. The anti-Allied adherents left the city as fast as possible. Some leaders of the community with a white flag went out of the city to meet the Russian commander. Some of the inhabitants who had signed a telegram, asking the government to declare war against the Allies, on the same day rushed to the Post and Telegraph Office to cancel their signatures. The Russians took control of the city and on 16th December the Russian flag was hoisted over the consulate in Hamadan. The British Consul arrived at Hamadan on 28th December and surprisingly found the British belongings untouched.<sup>1</sup>

Major Muḥammad Taqī Khān, the gendarme commander, commented on the defeat, and stated that due to a lack of union, strength of will and sincerity of the leaders of the parties and tribesmen on one hand, and the superiority of Russian arms and numbers on the other, made it impossible to withstand the Russian troops.<sup>2</sup>

#### Formation of the Provisional Government

The Muhājirīn had been accused of being in rebellion against the government and causing disturbances in the country. On the

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1. F.O. 371-2724. No. 90. Jan. 5, 1916. British Consulate, Kermanshah, Hamadan; "The Times", Dec. 11, 1915.  
2. Kasravī, 648.



contrary, the National Committee at Qom endeavoured to deter any disorders in its regions and did its utmost to establish a well-organised administration in the cities which had accepted the Committee's authority. They tried to maintain security in the cities and on the roads, to obtain provisions for the cities; but the most important action was the establishment of Shīr-i Khurshīd-i Surkh. It was the first foundation similar to the Red Cross in Iran.

From the political point of view, the plans for a provisional government were about to take form. In that case the Committee would be officially recognised as the Provisional Government of Iran and the Central Powers would recognise its authority; therefore, there would not be any difficulty for the Provisional Government in concluding a treaty with the Central Powers.

The great difficulty in forming the Provisional Government was leadership. It was obvious that due to intensive rivalry among the parties' leaders, none of them would have received the others' support if he nominated himself for the leadership. Therefore, there was a suggestion to ask Mukhbīr us-Saltānah to accept the leadership. The Committee despatched a letter to Mukhbīr us-Saltānah in Tehran. After referring to the country's situation, they indicated that the only alternative to save the country from a disastrous future would be the help of patriotic and experienced persons. At that moment, he was the only one who could lead the country. The Committee hoped that under his leadership the country would have a better future. Mukhbīr us-Saltānah was asked to accept the proposal and to join the Muhājirīn at Qom and they were expecting to receive orders from him. But Mukhbīr us-Saltānah refused the request.<sup>1</sup> In

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1. Mukhbīr us-Saltānah, 289.

fact, he was not in favour of the Muhājirat at all and did not agree with their views; even on 15th November, in spite of 'Āṣim Bey, the Turkish Ambassador, who asked him to join the Muhājirīn, he rejected the idea and went to Shāh 'Abd ul-'Azīm. As soon as he received the government's message to come to Tehran, he returned to the capital.

The political prospects in Qom were a matter of anxiety for the parties, particularly the Moderates, who had recently established a close relationship with the Germans. The Moderate leaders, intending to deter any accusation of blindly following the Germans, concluded a convention of co-operation with the Imperial Government of Germany on 2nd December 1915; the convention was signed by the Committee of the Moderate Party and Schunemann, the German Consul of Kermanshah, who was present at Qom on behalf of the Government of Germany. The Moderates undertook to assist and co-operate with the Germans for Irano-German interests in all cities of Iran; the Germans undertook the following articles:

- 1) As long as the war continues against the Russian and British Governments in Iran, the Imperial Government of Germany will assist, as much as possible, the Moderate Committee with arms, ammunition and officers for the provinces.
- 2) It will be recommended to all German agents to offer their assistance by all means to the members of the Moderate Party in the provinces, and consider them as their allies and friends.
- 3) Mr. Schunemann at Qom and the Secretary of the German Legation in Tehran will pay the Moderate Committee leaders the expenditure for preparation of arms and equipment for pro-Moderate tribes. The Committee of Moderates will submit the lists and documents of expenses to the German Legation.
- 4) The German Minister will give official protection to six members of the High Committee of the Moderate Party for their lives, properties and dignities. 1



The main purpose of political activities in Qom was to bring about the means of a general unification against the Allies in the country. Apart from direct contacts with the tribal chiefs and influential people in the provinces, the National Committee of Qom had started vast propaganda in the provinces by despatching envoys for public speeches, distributing broadsheets and official proclamations as representatives of national authority. In a proclamation, the National Committee acknowledged to all the people in the country, especially the members of the parties, that due to the foreigners' activities the eternity of the Islamic religion, national dignity and sovereignty were in great danger. For the survival of the country, there was no hope but the union of all sincere Iranian people against the foreigners. The Committee believed it was necessary for the members of the Democrat and Moderate Parties and other political groups, without concern for their political views, to unite to defend the integrity and independence of the country against their enemy.<sup>1</sup>

From a military point of view, the military organisation of the National Committee at Qom was quite complicated. In addition to receiving forces from tribes such as the Bakhtiyārī and Shāhsavān and hundreds of volunteers from the cities, even some notorious groups under the command of their leaders, such as Nā'ib Ḥusayn Khān Kāshī and his son Māshā'llāh Khān, had joined the National Army. Such a heterogeneous force would naturally create some problems. Apart from lack of training, arms, ammunition and discipline, they were various groups with different interests and some of them were not on friendly terms with each other; for instance, Sardār Şaulat

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1. Ibid., 249.

Bakhtiyārī and Māshā'llāh Khān had been fighting against each other for a long time. However, the Committee kept all the forces under the title of National Army and the tribesmen and other groups were called Mujāhidīn. Each one called himself a mujāhid or fadā'ī. The only regular force was the gendarmerie, which created the backbone of the National Army. The army was under the instruction of German and Swedish officers, Iranian gendarmerie officers, tribal chiefs and leaders of nationalist groups, which sometimes produced some problems. The National Army acted under the supervision of the Committee, in the name of a jihād for the country's independence and religion. At any rate, the forces produced no mischief and most of them did their utmost.

The German military assistance up to that time consisted only of some officers, arms and ammunition which could be used only in small operations and did not enable the National Army to stand against Russian forces, especially as some of the volunteers were not even armed or had unsuitable rifles. The only remedy was the arrival of German or Turkish assistance and in spite of all promises there was no sign of any adequate armaments for them.

#### The Sāvah Conflict

The National Committee of Qom and the German military advisers realised that there would be an imminent invasion of Qom by the Russian troops; therefore, a force consisting of gendarmes and some other groups of tribesmen, Shāhsavān and Māshā'llāh Khān, had fortified themselves near Sāvah, 140 km south-west of Tehran and 90 km north-west of Qom, where the roads to Tehran, Hamadan and Qom met.



The National Army used its utmost to strengthen their position near Sāvah and despatched those groups who arrived from the provinces to the Sāvah front.

The second division of the Russian forces marched on Qom in order to put an end to the problems there as soon as possible and to deter the Committee from being powerful and dangerous. On 9th December, an intensive battle between the National Army and Russian troops occurred. In spite of the Russians' superiority in all aspects of military operations, the National Army stood against the Russian troops for some days. At first the National Army even had some small victories. Both sides received reinforcements; the Russians received 1,000 men and the National Army 500 men. On 19th December the Russian artillery opened fire on the National Army and the Russian cavalry attacked them. The irregular forces of the National Army fled but the gendarmes fought as long as was possible and pulled back tactically. The Russian troops occupied Sāvah shortly afterwards, and their legation, in a proclamation issued in Tehran about the Sāvah fight, stated that:

On Sunday, the sixth of Decaber, 11th of Šafar, 19th of December, the Imperial forces occupied Sāvah. The rebels and corrupters who had revolted against the lawful Shah and government fled and left their casualties and wounded on the battlefield. Pursuit of the rebels is continuing. Yesterday, all of Qom's dependencies were occupied by the Imperial forces. The Imperial Legation of Russia indicates that any news about the progress of the rebellion is absolutely false and groundless; it should not be believed. 1

The last defence for Qom was Manzariyah, a good strategical location 27 km from Qom on the Tehran-Qom road. A division of the

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1. Ibid., 275.

Russian forces, simultaneously with the occupation of Sāvah, approached Qom. At Manzariyah, gendarmerie forces and some tribes, such as the Bakhtiyārī, took part. Heavy fighting occurred but did not last long. Russian forces, especially the artillery, forced the National Army to withdraw to Qom.

### The Fight at Rubāṭ Karīm

The National Committee formed a plan to send a force to attack the capital and to take the Shah to Isfahan. In that case, the formation of a government would be no problem and Iran could declare war against the Allies. Therefore, a force consisting of 700 to 800 men (the Reuter agency reported 1000 men<sup>1</sup>) were gathered. The gendarmes consisted of a squadron of cavalry and a regiment of infantry and the rest were some groups of Mujāhidīn under the command of Amīr Ḥishmat and 'Alī Khān Siyāhkūhī and other leaders of the Mujāhidīn. These forces arrived at Rubāṭ Karīm, 27 km from Tehran on the Tehran-Qom road. It was a matter of great anxiety to the government. There was a possibility that the capital would be a battlefield. In a telephone communication, Mustashār ud-Daulah, the Minister for Post and Telegraph, tried to convince Amīr Ḥishmat to reconsider his intentions but Amīr Ḥishmat refused; therefore, the government took precautionary measures by sending gendarmes and Cossacks, who were at Tehran, to guard the capital from possible attacks by the National Army, and deferred a public panic. Meanwhile, the Russians had been informed of the national forces' intention. Therefore, the Russian troops at

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1. "The Times", Dec. 27, 1915.



Yangī Imām and reinforcements from Qazvin under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Belomestoff, "with instructions to destroy by a sweep and unexpected blow the band in question"<sup>1</sup>; advanced towards Rubāṭ Karīm via the capital. On Wednesday 22nd December about 1.30 p.m. heavy fighting occurred. The Russians used all their possibilities to put an intensive pressure on the opposition. The artillery opened fire on the gendarmes and Mujāhidīn fortifications and then armoured vehicles kept them under strong machine gun fire. Withstanding this was not possible, mostly due to inadequate arms against Russian troops. The national force had to leave their position in order to withdraw. The Russian cavalry finished the battle on the same day. They attacked the opposition with sabres and swords. It was nearly a massacre. They hated the gendarmes and killed them without mercy. It was said 140 to 200 were killed and 72 captured and a large number wounded. The Russian Legation in Tehran, on 25th December, issued a proclamation:

Yesterday evening, the rebels and a division of gendarmes, which have forgotten their duties towards the Imperial Majesty and government and had joined the rebellion, were defeated completely at Rubāṭ Karīm. 2

The proclamation stated that over 240 were killed and 70 men captured. The Russians blamed Amīr Hishmat and 'Alī Khān Siyāhkūhī, the leaders of the National Army, for causing the bloodshed and then they took flight. However, the rest of the gendarmes and Mujāhidīn withdrew and due to the occupation of Qom some of them, by changing their clothes, went to Tehran; Amīr Hishmat and the others proceeded towards Isfahan via Kavīr.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Sipihr, 276.

3. "Ra'd", No. 68, Dec. 23, 1915, and No. 74, Dec. 25, 1915; "Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 38, Dec. 23, 1915 and No. 39, Dec. 25, 1915; "The Times/

The Fall of Mustaufi ul-Mamalik

After being disappointed with German assistance, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik was very anxious for the future of the country. He believed that it was better for the country to build a positive and friendly relationship with the Allies by concluding a treaty in favour of Iran. He had been trying many times but received no positive answer from the Allies; now the time seemed ripe and he tried hard to achieve his intention. Some of the politicians agreed and encouraged him to do so. For instance, both Iranian Ambassadors in Petrograd and London advocated the idea of an alliance with the Allies and believed that Iran should not miss that opportunity. They advised the government to conclude the treaty as soon as possible, for due to rapid changes in the war's situation, Iran might have no better chance. They recommended, with few differences, that the treaty should contain a guarantee of independence and integrity to Iran by both powers and their Allies, France and Italy; abrogation of spheres of influence in Iran; cancellation of capitulations; military and financial assistance; and a guarantee of Iran's presence at the peace conference.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently Mustaufi ul-Mamalik used the Muhajirin as a winning card to ease the Allies' pressure and bring them to friendly relations in favour of Iran. He was successful but his plan went beyond his control, and the situation became crucial. The Committee of Qom received support, organised administration, gained power and claimed

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Times", Dec. 27, 1915; see also Sipahr, 275; Kasravi, 652-56; Qa'immaqami, op. cit., 87-90; Miroshnikov, op. cit., 51; Afsar, op. cit., 137-38.

1. I.F.O., C. 66, f. 24, No. 7. dated 22 Muharram 1334. Petrograd; I.F.O., C. 66, f. 36, No. 96. dated 21st Muharram 1334, No. 143.



that they had legal authority over the country's affairs, while the Iranian Government lost its popularity as it inclined more and more towards the Allies.

From the Allied point of view, the prospects of political conditions in Iran and the military situation of the war, especially in Mesopotamia, was not in their favour; nevertheless, the Allies tried to keep the Iranian Government under their influence by threatening the future of the country's independence and controlling through the moratorium the government's only income. They also used the Russian forces to eliminate any opposition. On the other hand, they wanted to bring Iran on their side with a treaty of alliance to deter any possibility of a general uprising against themselves and to weaken their political opposition in the country. The ebb and flow of diplomatic language of the Allies' representatives in Tehran was dependent on the progress of the Russian troops against the National Army. The Allies had no doubt about the tendency of the Iranian Government towards themselves, as it was reported that "at this moment the Shah and Prime Minister, both very timid are sincerely in favour of alliance."<sup>1</sup> The Iranian Government was well aware that the largest opposition to any inclination towards the Allies was public opinion; therefore, they endeavoured to prepare the ground in public for an Irano-Allied alliance. The Tehran newspapers, in support of the idea of having an alliance with the Allies, issued several articles. They encouraged the government in its intentions and strongly attacked the opposition, especially those ministers who were opposed to the policy.

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1. F.O. 371-2438. No. 505. Dec. 2, 1915. Dec., Marling, Tehran.

"Ra'd" commented on the situation of the country and believed that the time was very crucial and only the government could take a definite decision in order to put an end to the crisis. The writer added that the effort to maintain neutrality had been in vain and encouraged Mustaufi to act immediately. In conclusion the writer quoted the Prime Minister's speech, that "the government without support of the nation and the nation without leadership of the government will not reach any prosperous points."<sup>1</sup>

"Asr-i Jadid" rejected the continuation of neutrality and stated that there were two ways and the government had to choose one or the other. The writer added that the Prime Minister had rejected the rumours of any arrangement with one side (Germany) and the other side would accept the Iranian conditions.<sup>2</sup> The newspaper in a later issue referred to the Prime Minister's speech, that "we have neither drunk milk with the Germans [as brothers] nor undertaken to be the Russians' enemy till the day of judgement. Our friendship and enmity is only from Iran's interests."<sup>3</sup>

However, the Iranian people had suffered and were still suffering from the policy of both powers and their military operations in Iran, particularly the Russians' threat to the capital; their hatred was too deep to be uprooted by a change in government policy. The Shah, government and the speaker of the Majlis had received telegrams from some cities, stating that there had been news that the government intended to join an alliance with the British and Russians in order to declare war against Turkey. They protested and expressed their

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1. "Ra'd", No. 56, Dec. 8, 1915/Muharram 30, 1334.

2. "Asr-i Jadid", No. 29, Dec. 2, 1915/Muharram 24, 1334.

3. Ibid., No. 40, Dec. 30, 1915/Safar 12, 1334.



rejection of the government's attitude and warned the government that if they took such a decision the people would rise in rebellion.

Şaulat ud-Daulah despatched a telegram to the Shah, stating:

Ever since the outbreak of the European war, when Your Royal Order was issued to maintain neutrality, I have been checking public excitement with great trouble and I have been using my endeavours in the hills of Behbahan for the first 2 or 3 months for the preservation of order.

News has been received stating that the Government have passed a resolution to embark on hostile operations against the Turkish Government. Although this regrettable news cannot be believed, I humbly beg to represent to Your Imperial Majesty that whoever has moved such a resolution is a traitor. I pray Y.I.M. in the name of all the Qashqais, and the majority of the people of Fars not to cause the Nation, God forbid, to lose its love for Your Imperial Majesty, should such a decision have been taken, I beg by means of this telegram to resign my service and responsibility, and it is impossible for me to oppose a Muhammadan Government.

If the fact is contrary to this rumour, I and my family and all Qashqais will be always ready to sacrifice our unworthy lives in compliance with Your Imperial Majesty's orders. 1

Mustaufi ul-Mamalik believed that the only alternative which might appease public opinion and settle the political crisis in the country was to receive inducible advantages from the Allies through the alliance in order to recover past and present maltreatment by the Allies and attract the Muhajirin and nationalists' attention. The Allied Legations in Tehran had been informed of the approximate terms which the Iranian Government most likely would submit to the Allies for concluding an Irano-Allied alliance. The Russians received the terms in eight points and the British in more detail, eleven points in all:

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1. F.O. 371-2725. Dated 1st Jadi (21st December 1915).

First. Cession of Persian territory embracing holy places including (Khadimain) ? Haramain, viz., Baghdad. Second. Cancellation of all Persia's debts to Great Britain and Russia. Third. Two Powers to supply arms and ammunition for 50,000 men. Fourth. Large monthly subvention during war. Fifth. Abrogation of 1907 convention. Sixth. Stipulations of 1911 ultimatum to be cancelled. Seventh. Large modifications of treaty (of) Turkomanchai. Eighth. Loan of 8 million pounds to be arranged after war by international syndicate. Ninth. Revision of tariff. Tenth. In Persia foreigners to possess real estate on same conditions as exist in Turkey. Eleventh. Two Powers to guarantee independence and integrity of Persia. 1

Meanwhile, the alliance between Iran and the Allies had been considered by both powers' governments. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had indicated that the Russians did not have arms to spare to submit to Iran, but "Persia is free to buy and import them via Russia"; concerning financial assistance, he stated that he agreed with financial support "provided that foreign debt of Persia is not affected." Mr. Marling expressed his opinion about the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs' attitude and stated that "His Excellency does not at all realise delicacy of the situation." He added that this kind of attitude would "obviously ... inspire mistrust of sincerity of our friendship." He added that the Iranian Government was not able to obtain any arms and if they could, they might be suspended in Russia at any time. Mr. Marling then referred to financial assistance, from the Russian Minister's point of view, that "indicated intention of maintaining our financial grip." He believed "an attitude of this kind would be in my opinion unfortunate at present."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marling referred to present conditions in Iran and

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1. F.O. 371-2727. Tele. No. 508-F. Dec. 4, 1915. Tehran to India.  
 2. F.O. 371-2428. No. 505. Dec. 2, 1915. Decypher. Marling, Tehran.



the situation in Mesopotamia; he anticipated the possible consequences in future and stated that:

Baghdad being relieved and Nixon being in no position for the present presumably to resume advance I submit it may be assumed enemy will devote all his attention to his main objective that is forcing Persia into war against us. This will be best achieved by sending into Persia all troops that can be spared from watching Nixon with practical certainty of raising at least western provinces against Entente. Appearance of Turkish Army reinforced by gendarmerie and by local levies already being collected will fire Persia with hope of driving out Russians. This combined with promises held out by Germans ..., will make it extremely hard for any Cabinet to join us except on terms of a most attractive nature. 1

Although the Shah and Prime Minister were willing to conclude the treaty of alliance, it was reported by Mr. Marling about the Prime Minister: "I do not doubt his good faith for he is making great efforts to bring round public opinion to accept (?) alliance with the two powers."<sup>2</sup> But the government did not have the support of all members of the cabinet. Mr. Marling described the attitude of the ministers towards the Allies, as they could "only count on Farman Farma, Sipadar and Ala ul-Saltanah, two latter are valuable only as passive vote in the Cabinet."<sup>3</sup> He was also able to buy one more vote. The rest of the ministers, mostly due to public opinion, did not agree and even showed a hostile attitude towards the Allies.

From the Allies' point of view the Iranian Government's terms for a treaty of alliance were interpreted as "the Persian Government has an exaggerated opinion of the importance which an Alliance with Persia would have for Russia and England ..."<sup>4</sup> Regarding territory,

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1. F.O. 271-2727. No. 508-F. Dec. 4, 1915. Tehran to India.
  2. F.O. 371-2438. No. 513. Dec. 6, 1915. Decypher Marling Tehran.
  3. F.O. 371-2438. No. 1801. Dec. 2, 1915. Decypher Buchanan, Petrograd.
  4. F.O. 371-2438. No. 1829. Dec. 7, 1915. Decypher. Buchanan, Petrograd.

finance and arms, the Russians might agree with certain modifications. They could not afford to help Iran with military assistance; but Iran would be free to obtain arms elsewhere. As to financial assistance, the Russian Government believed it could only be given as a new subvention and cancellation of principal of the loans, which would be approximately 70,000,000 roubles, and this was unacceptable. The revision of the treaty of Turkmanchai and the tariff were negotiable; but as to the ultimatum of 1911 and the convention of 1907, the Russian Government believed any revision of these were out of the question. Mr. Sazonof stated that he did not see "what services Persia could render us in return for such sacrifices as such an army could not be raised and trained for long time."<sup>1</sup>

The British Government took the matters under careful consideration. The advantages of having an alliance with Iran from the British point of view were:

- 1) The great moral effect upon Moslem opinion and the loss to Pan-Islamic propaganda of one of its chief weapons.
- 2) The closing of the road from Constantinople to India.
- 3) The protection of our flank in Mesopotamia and safety of the oil fields. 2

But, even if the Iranian Government concluded an alliance, public opinion would refuse it, and consequently most of the country would be against the government. Therefore, Pan-Islamic propaganda would not fail, Mesopotamia would be in greater danger and the oil fields could not be saved.<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. 371-2438. No. 1829. Dec. 7, 1915. Decypher Buchanan, Petrograd.  
 2. F.O. 2438. No. 508-F. Dec. 4, 1915. to Marling, Tehran.  
 3. Ibid.



The British War Office looked at the situation from another angle and believed:

It is of the utmost importance to prevent the Persian Government from throwing in its lot against the forces of the Entente. From a military point of view it is worth paying a very high price to ensure having Persia or part of it on our side under existing conditions. 1

The Government of India disagreed with any rupture of relations with Iran, particularly if it would put an end to an alliance between Iran and Germany, which "could have a very unfavourable effect on Moslem opinion in India and Afghanistan"<sup>2</sup>, but the Government of India disregarded the Iranian proposals and hinted that at any rate "the Russian Government would reject them as impossible."<sup>3</sup> However, it seemed the Government of India did not disagree with some sort of moderate terms for the alliance.

The British Government indicated its view, that "it is clear that many of the conditions which have been suggested would not be acceptable, to both British and Russian Governments"; nevertheless, the ministers in Tehran were instructed that due to the vital importance of the situation they should avoid a breach of relations between Iran and the Allies and their reaction to the Iranian proposals "should [be to] return a conciliatory and temporising reply." It was recommended that in any case the ministers try to postpone a decision about the negotiations until the Russian troops' operation obtained some results and the British Army stabilised its position in Mesopotamia. Finally, the British Government expressed their idea that:

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1. F.O. 371-2438. Dec. 8, 1915. WO to FO.
  2. F.O. 371-2438. No. 4495. Dec. 9, 1915. India Office.
  3. Ibid.

Government to extend to Great Britain and Russia an effective and friendly neutrality which in the circumstances of the case will in my opinion be in some respects preferable to an open alliance. 1

Mustaufi ul-Mamalik once more despatched a mission of three men, 'Adl ul-Mulk, deputy Majlis speaker, Arbāb Kaykhusrau and Mīrzā Qāsim Khān Tabrizi (Şur-Isrāfil), to Qom to inform the Committee and the members of the Majlis of the Prime Minister's message, which indicated that he intended to conclude a treaty of alliance with the Allies. It was pointed out that the Prime Minister believed it was in the interests of Iran to join the Allies and the Muhājirīn should return to Tehran in order to consult with the government. It was added that if the treaty was not signed in three days he would have to resign. The members of the Majlis who had made the Muhājirat, who were at Kāshān at the time, in a meeting, discussed the matters and decided to refuse the Prime Minister's suggestion and protested against any alliance with the Allies. Mīrzā Qāsim Khān Tabrizi joined the Muhājirīn and the others returned to the capital without hope.

Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, in a meeting with the British and Russian Ministers, informed them that due to public opinion, he was not able to join an alliance against Turkey, which probably would end in civil war, and Iran would prefer to remain neutral. It was the time for both ministers to hammer the Prime Minister. Mr. Marling reported that they replied to the Prime Minister that:

It was idle to talk of a policy of neutrality which would inevitably result in Persia being forced to join our enemies. No middle course was possible, Persia must be with us or against us, and the Government had better reflect seriously on the consequences to Persia both immediate and future if she allowed herself to be led by

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1. F.O. 371-2438. No. 188274/15. F.O., Dec. 16, 1915. To Count Benckendorff, Russia.



pressure of ignorant and venal public opinion to join our enemies, negotiations should commence at once. 1

The Russian Minister referred to the Russian force at Qazvin and stated that it "might take matters into its own hands."<sup>2</sup>

### The Shah

The Shah had been under considerable pressure since he had assumed the throne, for it was beyond his power and ability. He was at the stage of a nervous breakdown. He was much more concerned about his future than the country's; therefore, in a secret message to the Russian Minister through Kāmarān Mīrzā, his uncle, he informed the minister that:

His Majesty feels difficulties of his position for one so young and inexperienced as himself to be intolerable. It was he who had come to the conclusion that an alliance with the two powers was the only way out of Persia's difficulties but obstacles in his way were too formidable for him to ... deal with and he has therefore decided to abdicate in favour of his father; he himself would again become Valiad [Valī 'Ahd] and live at the Court. 3

It was a kind of secret crisis in Iran for the Allied Governments, and was immediately taken under consideration. The Russian Minister at Tehran was instructed "to use all his influence to induce the Shah to abandon this intention which he attributed to German intrigues."<sup>4</sup> But if he insisted on his decision, it might be advisable that the Shah should become Valī 'Ahd and be installed as Governor of Tabriz,

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 371-2438. No. 521. Dec. 11, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.

3. F.O. 371-2438. Dec. 10, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.

4. F.O. 371-2438. No. 1871. Dec. 15, 1915. Decypher Buchanan, Petrograd.

where he would be safe from German influence; and the ex-Shah would take his position.

The Government of India was in total disagreement with the Russian proposal, in which Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh would be a tool in Russian hands and there would be an uprising against him in Iran. The British Government was not in favour of the return of the ex-Shah but suggested a Council of Regency, consisting of three persons, and that the Shah might go to Tabriz or to Russia as he desired, with a suitable pension for himself and the three regents "whose names would be submitted to him by two Legations."<sup>1</sup> The Russian Government was opposed to a Regency Council, as were the British and Russian Ministers at Tehran, as Mr. Marling believed that "Regency council of three would be quite unworkable in Persia where personal jealousies and intrigues outweigh all considerations of public interests."<sup>2</sup>

However, it was suggested that the Shah be kept on his throne at any rate. The Shah informed the Allied Ministers that due to the ambiguity of the situation and his future, he would like to have assurances from both governments regarding his future and he required the following points:

- Firstly. Inviolableness of his Person and household.
- Secondly. Freedom of movement in and out of Persia.
- Thirdly. No interference (? with his) Correspondence by post or telegraph.
- Fourthly. Civil list of 30,000 tomans a month to be guaranteed in case Persian treasury cannot pay it.
- Fifthly. Suitable allowance in the event of his departure from Persia.
- Sixthly. Crown Jewels to be considered his personal property. 3

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1. F.O. 371-2438. No. 448. F.O., Dec. 15, 1915.  
 2. F.O. 371-2438. No. 544. Dec. 19, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.  
 3. F.O. 371-2438. No. 552. Dec. 21, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.



In return, "the Shah would unreservedly throw in his lot and at once appoint any Prime Minister we [the Allies] may wish."<sup>1</sup>

The British Government agreed to the Shah's proposals with some modifications and the elimination of point 6. The Russian Government received the Shah's proposals, the most important difference from the British modifications being that "He asks for pension not only if he leaves Persia but also if he abdicates, and he demands that the Crown jewels should be regarded as his personal property if he abdicates."<sup>2</sup> The attitude of the Russian Government towards the Shah's demands was almost the same as the British. However, it seemed there had been some sort of agreement with the Shah in which the problems were apparently sorted out.

#### Farmān Farmā's Cabinet

At the same time as the Russian troops had pushed back the Muhājirīn, the language of the Allied Ministers changed. In an audience with the Shah, the ministers stated that the present cabinet consisted of anti-Allied elements and they believed "a change of Prime Minister was inevitable in near future."<sup>3</sup> The British Minister suggested that Farmān Farmā be appointed Prime Minister. The Shah agreed and believed it should take place at once. On 24th December Mustaufī ul-Mamālik presented his resignation and Farmān Farmā was appointed to form his cabinet. Three days later Farmān Farmā introduced his cabinet to the Shah, as follows: Farmān Farmā, Prime Minister and Minister for Interior; Mushāvir ul-Mamālik, Minister

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. 371-2438. No. 1967. Dec. 26, 1915. Decypher Buchanan, Petrograd.

3. F.O. 371-2438. No. 564. Dec. 25, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.

for Foreign Affairs; Sipahdār A'zam, Minister for War; Shihāb ud-Daulah, Minister for Sciences; Sardār Manṣūr, Minister for Post and Telegraph; 'Alā us-Saltānah, Minister for Justice; Ṣarīm ud-Daulah, Minister for Public Works.

The announcement of Farmān Farmā's cabinet indicated a radical change in favour of the British and Russians in their Iranian policy. As Mr. Marling stated, "Farman Farma at least got rid of the enemy elements that had figured in late Administration."<sup>1</sup> The appointment of Sardār Manṣūr and Ṣarīm ud-Daulah, son of Zill us-Sultān, was a great advantage for the Allies. Reuter reported, "Prince Firman Firma has been nominated Premier by the Shah. This is considered a great diplomatic victory for the Allies."<sup>2</sup> The cabinet list did not include the Minister for Finance, but Yamīn ul-Mulk was in charge of this ministry. It was not surprising that even Mr. Marling believed that the appointment of Yamīn ul-Mulk "was most unfortunate, and certainly made to facilitate the Prime Minister's scheme of personal profit. It is universally accepted that his Highness took 12,000 tomans to make the appointment."<sup>3</sup>

Farmān Farmā was well known as a pro-Allied supporter and after 15th November, when Mustaufī ul-Mamālik was under pressure to include him in his cabinet, Farmān Farmā's popularity decreased intensively. Mr. Marling reported, "Farman Farma has thrown in his lot with us and is risking life and property in our cause."<sup>4</sup> In fact Farmān Farmā had frequently been threatened with death and was asked either to

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 36. Tehran, March 24, 1916. Marling to Grey.

2. "The Times", Dec. 27, 1915.

3. F.O. 416-64. No. 36. Tehran, March 24, 1916. Marling to Grey.

4. F.O. 371-2438. No. 473. Nov. 22, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.



join the nationalists or to leave the country. There was an attempt on his life. Since Farmān Farmā had been a member of Mustaufī's cabinet, he had expressed anxiety about his safety and damage to his property to the Allied Ministers at Tehran and asked them in case of necessity, that if he should leave the country he needed to be assured of both powers' support, which included financial assistance. The British Minister at Tehran suggested to his government a grant of £400 monthly to Farmān Farmā and also he received £15,000 for damages to the harvest of his villages, which according to his claim had been plundered by the anti-Allied groups. Farmān Farmā also expected to receive compensation for his property and wanted a guarantee from both governments that after the war he would be helped to regain his fortune.<sup>1</sup> The British and Russian Governments believed, however, that they should firmly support Farmān Farmā. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs instructed the minister at Tehran to inform Farmān Farmā of full support by the Russian Government and a "certain amount of pecuniary assistance from Russian Government."<sup>2</sup>

Farmān Farmā's first step was to take some measures against anti-Allied elements in the cities, especially Tehran. Some people had to leave the capital or hide somewhere. Farmān Farmā's main intention was to discharge the Swedish officers, which was one of the greatest Allied desires. Mustaufī ul-Mamālik had already discharged some of the Swedish officers commanding the gendarmerie forces in Qazvin, Fars, Burūjird and Arak. They were accused of being disobedient to the government. Farmān Farmā dismissed almost all the rest of the

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1. F.O. 2437. No. 507. Dec. 3, 1915. Decypher Marling, Tehran.  
 2. F.O. 371-2437. No. 1940. Dec. 23, 1915. Decypher Buchanan, Petrograd.

officers. Colonel Edwall, the commander-in-chief of the gendarmerie forces, resigned and Major Nystrom was appointed. Simultaneously the Swedish officers commanding the gendarmerie in Isfahan, Kāshān and Kermanshah were also dismissed. In fact there were very few Swedish officers left in the gendarmerie forces in Iran.

The Allied Legations in fact had complete control over the government and asked for whatever was possible. The Russian Legation issued proclamations at any occasion. Their language against the Democrats was insulting in spite of the party's popularity in the country. In one of the statements, the Russians referred to the friendly relations between the two countries and stated that due to the disturbances in the country, which had been created by "corrupters and rebels in the name of the Democrat committee", the subjects of both powers did not have security and their trade was paralysed. The Iranian Government was not taking, or did not want to take, any measures against them but both governments could not be silent and inevitably took action by sending Russian forces into Iran. The statement pointed out that the Russian troops had no intention of occupying the country, but only of preventing intrigues by their enemies.<sup>1</sup>

Later on, Farmān Farmā tried to convince the Muhājirīn that the prolongation of their attitude was in vain and they could neither achieve anything nor benefit the country. He despatched a telegram to Sardār Ashja', the Governor of Isfahan, instructing him to convey the telegram to Ḥāj Āqā Nūr Allāh, Mudarris and Ṭabāṭabā'i. He asked the leaders of the 'ulamā' whether they agreed with him and would allow

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1. Sipih, 319.



the government to take some steps to improve the situation in the country, or if they would follow the attitude of those German-gold paid persons who were concerned with their own interests only. In the second case Farmān Farmā had to keep silent and let them have another experience at Isfahan as they had had at Arāk, Sāvah and Rubāṭ Karīm.

Farmān Farmā tried to encourage the Shah to agree to an alliance with the Allies. The presence of Russian troops and the defeat of the Muhājirīn overshadowed public opinion. He received the support of both "Ra'd" and "‘Asr-i Jadīd" for the alliance with both powers. On 16th January 1916, Farmān Farmā submitted a draft of the government proposals for an alliance with the Allies to both legations. It was more or less Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's proposal, as follows:

1. There shall be an alliance for fifteen years from date of signature on following terms.

2. Great Britain and Russia will within three months of signature furnish gratuitously to Persia modern rifles, ammunition, and guns sufficient in the judgement of Persian Government for 50,000 men, and will make good losses incurred in circumstances contemplated in article 4.

3. Should she request it, Great Britain and Russia will give Persia military assistance. Operations will be directed by a staff composed of Persian officers and officers of the Power sending troops. Commander-in-chief will be appointed by the Shah.

4. During continuance of the European war Persia will employ all her influence and all her forces, regular and irregular, to safeguard her interests and those of her allies in Persian territory. The two Powers will endeavour by all means to prevent an attack on Persia.

In case of danger they will take every step to ensure the safety of throne to Shah and his descendants.

5. All troops of the two Powers will evacuate Persian territory as soon as needed for their presence as provided in articles 3 and 4 has ceased. Persia will not be called upon to contribute to their expenses while in Persia, and will have the right to determine date of their departure.

6. From date of signature Great Britain and Russia will abstain from all measures contrary to independence and territorial integrity of Persia, such as interference in her internal affairs, conclusion of public or private pacts with tribal chiefs, etc., and any such existing conventions are hereby annulled.

7. Engagements of 24th December, 1911, and 20th March, 1912, taken by Persia in consequence of Russian ultimatum of 29th November, 1911, and of Anglo-Russian demands of 18th February, 1912, are cancelled.

Nor will the two Powers in future conclude any agreement with each other or with other Powers such as infringe Persian independence, and will oppose such an attempt on the part of any other Power.

8. Anglo-Russian monthly subvention until one month after conclusion of the great war of 500,000 tomans, as well as 750,000 tomans for upkeep of troops mentioned in article 2.

9. Persian debts of every kind whatever to be taken over by the two Powers.

10. Revision of Treaty of Turkmanchai and annexe concerning ceremonial.

11. Revision of customs tariff.

12. Persia will recognise rights of foreigners to hold landed estates on condition that such persons are subjected in all respects to Persian laws and customs. Immigration en masse to be prohibited unless immigrants are treated while in Persia as natives.

13. Persian sovereignty to be recognised over islands of Bahrein Tomb, Sire, Abu Musa, Farur, and Ashouradi.

14. Persia to have the right to navigate the Caspian Sea and have men-of-war there.

15. Persia to be represented at Peace Conference.

Annexe.

Execution of treaty to be secured by signature thereof by France, Italy and Belgium. 1

The significance of the proposal showed the grip of the Russian and British Governments over the country. The Allies did not desire

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1. F.O. 416-64. Tele. No. 51. Tehran, Jan. 19, 1916.



to commit themselves to such considerable undertakings, especially at that time as they were in a much better position in Iran than before. It was expected that the proposals would be submitted to drastic changes and omissions. However, the British and Russian Governments took the proposals under their consideration, during which time Farmān Farmā had to resign , and the government received no reply.

#### Withdrawal of Muhājirīn to Isfahan

The defeat at Sāvah and the Manzariyah conflict horrified the Muhājirīn in Qom. The evacuation of the city took place hastily. Most of the Muhājirīn proceeded to Kāshān and some of them via Arāk and Burūjird, to Kermanshah. Qom was occupied on 21st December. The government authorities and some leaders of the community met the Russian commanders and explained the situation in order to ease the Russian troops' harshness. The occupation of Qom took place without many serious incidents. Martial law was declared immediately and some of the opposition were arrested.

At Kāshān, the Muhājirīn were welcomed by the people. The last contact of Mustaufī ul-Mamālik's envoys took place in the city. The Committee called up a succession of members of the Majlis and other leaders of nationalists to discuss Mustaufī's plan for an alliance with the Allies, and also the return of the Muhājirīn to Tehran. The Prime Minister's proposals were refused with strong warnings to the government. Consequently Mustaufī's cabinet was changed. The Russian troops advanced towards Kāshān, causing the Muhājirīn to leave the city for Isfahan. The gendarmerie forces of Kāshāh also left the city and Russian forces occupied it on 1st January 1916.

Isfahan was the second main city of Iran which was in the hands of anti-Allied groups. The 'ulamā', Democrats and other parties indeed ruled in the city and the governor, Sardār Ashja', was absolutely powerless. The Muhājirīn received an enthusiastic welcome by the people. Highly anti-Allied propaganda covered the city. But after a while the residence of the Muhājirīn, due to the occupation of Kāshān and the Russian troops threatening Isfahan, produced tension and anxiety in the city.

After the change of cabinet not only did relations between the Muhājirīn and the government not improve, but in fact they grew worse. Meanwhile, the governor of Isfahan had been instructed to inform the inhabitants that the Muhājirīn were acting against the Shah and government and warned them that the Russian forces would occupy the city if the Muhājirīn remained there. It was a matter of great anxiety for the people; finally a telegram on behalf of the people was despatched to the Shah that the inhabitants of the south of Iran, especially Isfahan, would willingly sacrifice their lives and properties to defend his sovereignty and the country's independence. They had no intention whatsoever but to serve their popular Shah and were ready to obey what he ordered.<sup>1</sup> In replying to the telegram, the Shah pointed out that he had no intention of breaching his friendly relations with the Russian and British Governments, which existed at the time.<sup>2</sup> Later on, Farmān Farmā, in a telegram, instructed the governor of Isfahan to inform the 'ulamā' that after the telegram of the people to the Shah, he had been trying through diplomatic channels to detain the Russian forces from further advance. He indicated

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1. "Ra'd", No. 91, Jan. 23, 1916/Rabī' ul-Avval 17, 1334.

2. Ibid.



that he had assured the Allies that he would settle the problems in Isfahan. Farmān Farmā then criticised the Muhājirīn not only because their action had not saved the country, but also because they might attract the Russian troops into the central part of Iran. He blamed the Democrats for causing the crisis and attacked them because they were dragging the country into a state of annihilation for their own benefit. Farmān Farmā believed that it was the third time that the Democrats had involved the country in disastrous incidents. He referred to the incident of the bombardment of the Majlis by Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh, the ex-Shah, during the Constitutional Revolution, and the Russian ultimatum of 1911 about the Shuster event; at the time, they had closed down the Majlis. Farmān Farmā believed the Russians and British did not desire to take action against Iran; nevertheless, they were willing to give assurances and undertakings for the independence of Iran, but all had been in vain because of the ambition of those persons. He pointed out that open hostility against the Russians and British would jeopardise the independence of the country. Therefore, the anxiety of Iran's powerful neighbours should be soothed.<sup>1</sup> However, Farmān Farmā was able to postpone the Russian troops' advance towards Isfahan.

Although the German agents tried hard to hold Isfahan in hand and to stir up people against the Russians, it was obvious that they were not able to do so. The Muhājirīn realised that the people were worried about the arrival of Russian troops; therefore, they decided to leave the city. Some of them, such as Dihkhudā and Vahīd-i Dastgirdī, preferred to go to Bakhtiyārī tribes, but the other leaders

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1. I'zām Qudsī, 316-17.

and members of the Majlis, nationalists, and gendarmerie forces determined to go to Kermanshah. They gradually set out in groups at different times, via Qulpāyigān, Khumayn, Burūjird and Nihavand to Kermanshah. Some of them had to take a longer way and joined the Muhājirīn in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. The diaries of most of the Muhājirīn indicate a journey full of fear, danger and suffering. Considering the age and ability of most of the leaders, this kind of journey was a considerable risk. It was during winter and the ground was covered with heavy snow. They had to pass through a chain of mountains in one of the coldest regions of Iran. Their transportation was very poor and unsuitable and due to the Russian troops' threat on the main roads they had to proceed on by-ways. The inhabitants of some cities and villages did not show much sympathy towards them. The people were afraid of chastisement by the Russian troops and were reluctant to help the Muhājirīn. Above all, most of the Muhājirīn were not used to this kind of life.

After the Muhājirīn left Isfahan, the German Consul once more tried to keep the city under German control. He encouraged Şaulat ud-Daulah and some other groups to take over the city and they did so. Their savars took all the government offices and occupied the bank. It was a good pretext for the Russians to march on Isfahan and after brief fighting the opposition withdrew and on 19th March 1916, the Russian troops occupied the city.

#### The Occupation of Arāk

The Russian scheme was to approach the west of Iran from two directions, first via Hamadan to Kermanshah and second via Arāk, Burūjird and Nihavand to Kermanshah. Arāk was the main battlefield



for the second way. The National Army had a great stronghold and received some reinforcements from Luristan and Kermanshah. They could stand against the Russians for some weeks. However, some heavy fighting occurred between both sides and the National Army retreated; the Russian forces were able to occupy Arāk by 21st January 1916 and proceed towards Burūjird.

### Nizām us-Saltānah's Leadership

After the Muhājirīn had been refused by Mukhbīr us-Saltānah for their leadership, it was suggested that Nizām us-Saltānah was suitable for the position. A mission under the supervision of one of the Democrat leaders, Musāvāt, and some German officers went to Burūjird to meet Nizām us-Saltānah. He was Governor-General of Luristan and Khuzistan (Arabistan), and well known in the country. He had governed some of the most important provinces of Iran, such as Azarbaijan and Kermanshah.

Mr. Muḥammad 'Alī Māfī<sup>1</sup>, son of Nizām us-Saltānah, who had been elected as a member of the Majlis from Burūjird and at the time was at Tehran, has stated that he had received a telegram from his father, asking him to join his father in Burūjird as soon as possible. Nizām us-Saltānah and Farmān Farmā were related by marriage, for Sālār Lashgar, the Governor of Hamadan, who joined the Muhājirīn, was the son of Farmān Farmā and son-in-law of Nizām us-Saltānah. However, Mr. Māfī was told by Farmān Farmā to inform his father not to join the Muhājirīn. Mr. Māfī went to Qom and met the Committee and members

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1. Personal interview with Mr. Muḥammad 'Alī Māfī, Nizām us-Saltānah (he received his father's title), Friday, Oct. 14, 1977; see Appendix II.

of the Majlis. He was asked to encourage his father to accept the leadership of the Muhājirīn. When he arrived at Burūjird his father had already joined and agreed to the Muhājirīn's proposal. Nizām us-Saltānah had also received telegrams from Farmān Farmā and Shaykh Khazal, a powerful leader of Arab tribes in the south of Iran, who was a great friend of the British. He also was related to Nizām us-Saltānah. They asked Nizām us-Saltānah to avoid any connection with the Muhājirīn; otherwise he would lose all his fortune. Mr. Māfi said his father, in replying to them, despatched a verse of Sa'dī, the famous Iranian poet: "Bestowing life and properties, renouncing honour and disgrace, [for the sake] of love is the first step." Therefore, Nizām us-Saltānah indicated that he had chosen his way.

The German mission under the command of Count Kanitz had some meetings with Nizām us-Saltānah in the summer of 1915 and on 29th December 1915, a treaty between Count Kanitz and Nizām us-Saltānah was signed:

Monsieur le Comte Kanitz représentant autorisé de l'Empire Allemand conclue et arrête au nom de son Gouvernement avec Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh la convention suivant:

Article 1. Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh s'engage de prendre la direction du mouvement national, pour la libération de la Perse, avec tout son influence et tous ses moyens et faire la guerre contra la Russie et l'Angleterre jusqu'à la conclusion de la paix générale ou jusqu'au moment quand le Gouvernement Persan obtiendra la neutralité et l'indépendance absolue.

Article 2. Le Gouvernement Allemand garantie, jusqu'à la fin de la guerre, à Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh, le commandement de toute l'armée nationale persane, aussi bien que le commandement des forces allemandes et turques qui agiront en Perse contre les Russes et les Anglais, excepté les forces qui opèrent dans l'Azerbaidjan.



Article 3. Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh s'engage de se conformer aux hautes directions de Son Excellence le Maréchal v. d. Goltz Pacha ou de ses successeurs.

Article 4. Le Gouvernement Allemand s'engage de mettre à la disposition de Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh un corps d'officiers formant l'Etat Majeur de la dite Excellence.

Les plan des opérations seront dressés par le dit Etat-Majeur et exécutés après avoir été approuvés par Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh.

Dans le cas de désaccords entre Son Excellence et son Etat-Majeur la question sera tranchée dans une commission composée de Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh, Monsieur l'Attaché Militaire de l'Allemagne, le chef de l'Etat-Majeur et une personne désignée par Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh.

Article 5. Le Gouvernement Allemand s'engage, de mettre à la disposition de Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh les armes et les munitions nécessaires pour la guerre et de faire parvenir en Perse des troupes auxiliaires turques ou allemandes.

Le Gouvernement Allemand commencera les envois des dits armes, munitions et troupes au plustôt possible.

Article 6. Le Gouvernement Allemand payera, autant qu'il sera nécessaire, les frais de la guerre, des fonds qui ont été accordés à la Legation d'Allemagne à Téhéran et des sommes qui seront envoyées dans la suite pour ce but.

Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh emploiera autant que possible les ressources du pays pour le même but.

Article 7. Le Gouvernement Allemand mettera à la disposition de Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh, pour les dépenses personnelles et politiques de sa fonction la somme de vingt mille tomans par mois.

Article 8. Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh fera son possible pour que les sommes dépensées par l'Allemagne pour la guerre en Perse soient converties en une dette gouvernementale de la Perse remboursable à termes.

Article 9. Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh s'engage d'avoir prêt en tout cas pour le 14 Janvier 1916 quatre mille hommes armés.

Dans le cas où les provinces de Kermanchah de Kurdistan et la position de Kengaver seront pendant deux mois sous sa dépendance, Son Excellence fournira en plus une force de six (6) mille hommes armés.

Article 10. Le Gouvernement Allemand protégera d'une manière légale et diplomatique Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh, ses biens et sa famille pendant quinze ans après la guerre.

Article 11. Vu, que Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh entre dans la guerre sans l'autorisation de son Gouvernement, le Gouvernement Allemand lui garantie en tout cas, que la guerre finisse aux avantages de l'Allemagne ou non, lors des négociations de la paix, la propriété de tous ses biens meubles et immeubles et ses créances.

Article 12. En cas de la mort de Son Excellence Nizam-es-Saltaneh, les articles 10 et 11 de cette convention seront exécutés par le Gouvernement Allemand envers les héritiers de la dite Excellence.

Fait en double et signé à Bouroudjerde le vingt-six Décembre 1915 et le dix-sept Safar 1334.

(gez.) R. Nezamessaltaneh (gez.) Gf. Kanitz  
(u.persische Unterschrift)

Article additionnel. Son Excellence accomplira ses obligations concernant la mise en campagne des troupes (Art. 9) dans le case où Nazar Ali Khan sera empêché par le Gouvernement Allemand d'entrer à Loristan jusqu'à la fin de la guerre. Il es convenu que cet article additionnel ne concerne que les troupes de Loristan.

(gez.) Gf. Kanitz (gez.) Nezamessaltaneh  
(u.persische Unterschrift) 1

There were many speculations about the treaty between Nizām us-Saltānah and the Germans. "Ruski Slov" wrote that Nizām us-Saltānah had received 8,000,000 manats (Russian roubles) from the Germans.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marling reported that "Nizam us-Sultaneh ... is credibly reported to have received 80,000 l from the Germans."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Formation of the National Government in Kermanshah

After the conflict at Kangavar and the withdrawal of the British and Russian Consuls to Hamadan, Kermanshah became the main centre for

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1. Gehrke, II, 334-35. The number of troops mentioned in Article 9 is in dispute. According to Lenczowski, op. cit., 41, the number is 40,000. Ishtiaq Ahmad, op. cit., 298, gives the same number; although he seems to have taken his information from Sykes, the latter reports that the number agreed upon was only 4,000. Sykes, A History of Persia, op. cit., II, 544.
  2. "Ra'd", No. 105, Feb. 9, 1916/Rabī' us-Sanī 5, 1334.
  3. F.O. 416-64. No. 36. Tehran, March 24, 1916. Marling to Grey.



anti-Allied groups; even the Germans openly confessed the importance and vitality of the city from a German point of view, when Iqbāl ud-Daulah, the Governor-General of Kermanshah, who was at Tehran and intended to go to Kermanshah, received a message from the German Legation that they hoped there was no intention of bringing the Allied Consuls back to Kermanshah, otherwise the "Governor's own arrival would be forcibly prevented as German interests could not permit the possibility of closing their only means of communicating with outer world."<sup>1</sup>

The country's administration was in total chaos, particularly in Kermanshah. It had been months since the government's employees, including the police forces, had received salaries and rations. As soon as Iqbāl ud-Daulah arrived in Kermanshah, he tried to take some measures and to improve conditions, but he was not very successful.

The advance of Russian troops towards Tehran produced a hostile reaction against the Allies in Kermanshah. The people of Kermanshah declared their full support of the Committee of Qom; most of the tribes in the region announced that they would send armed forces to their assistance. The gendarmerie force at Kermanshah, under the command of Captain Sonesson, a Swedish officer, after a brief fight with Iranian Cossacks, disarmed them. By that time, from a military and political point of view, the region was completely under anti-Allied influence. Iqbāl ud-Daulah and other government officials were absolutely handicapped. On 10th December 1915, government offices and the Post and Telegraph Office were occupied by the gendarmes. Meanwhile, a heavy concentration of tribesmen at Kermanshah occupied

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1. F.O. 416-63. No. 373. Sept. 30, 1915. Marling to Grey.

the Customs offices in the region. They arrested the head of Customs, who was of Belgian nationality. In fact the city was cut off from the central government. Prince Reuss, the German Minister, who had been recalled to Berlin, arrived in Kermanshah on his way to Baghdad. He had already visited Isfahan, Arāk and Burūjird. The German Minister, in several meetings with the nationalist leaders in these cities, assured them of German support. In spite of all German propaganda, the news of Prince Reuss' dismissal was considered a defeat for German policy in Iran. Prince Reuss also had some meetings with local leaders and after some days left Kermanshah for Baghdad. Simultaneously, Dr. Vassel, Special Minister of Germany in Iran, arrived in Kermanshah and took over German political affairs in Iran. On 2nd January 1916, Marshal von der Goltz Pasha, in company with Colonel Popp and his military mission, arrived in Kermanshah. Colonel Popp had been in charge of military operations in Iran. Marshal von der Goltz stayed in the Kermanshah region for three days and discussed matters with the leaders of the nationalists and the German and Turkish representatives, and left the city for Baghdad. Fauzī Bey, the Turkish military attaché, and the Turkish Consul in Kermanshah were in the city and were co-ordinating highly political activities for the pan-Islamic movement.

The arrival of the Muhājirīn in Kermanshah created an intensively political atmosphere in the city. The outcome of a war between the National Army and Russian forces was not hopeful. They wanted to form a government as soon as possible in order to conclude an agreement of alliance with the Central Powers. There were some meetings between the 'ulamā', members of the Majlis, nationalists and some tribal chiefs. They decided to ask Nizām us-Saltānah to take over executive power and informed him officially that:



Due to the importance of the present situation of the country and the necessity for maintaining the means of forces and effective policy for securing of the internal administration of the country, releasing His Majesty Ahmad Shāh from danger and siege of foreign forces, and concluding political and military conventions and agreements, the committee of representatives believe that it is necessary to organise a council of executives which will be under your leadership to enact the duties according to opinions and programs which will be obtained by the committee of representatives. 1

The Committee's program had the same aims as that of the Muhājirīn.

Nizām us-Saltānah was determined to organise his cabinet. The National Committee of Qom, some of whose members were in Kermanshah, in a telegram congratulated Nizām us-Saltānah on his appointment, which indicated that the Committee recognised his leadership and submitted its authority to him. Nizām us-Saltānah immediately informed Berlin and Istanbul of his appointment. In his telegram to the German Emperor he stated:

Counting upon the sincerely friendly feelings of Your Majesty towards the Musulman world I, occupying the post of commander-in-chief of the Persian National Army, have the honour to express to your Majesty heartfelt gratitude for the evidences of your sympathy with our national affairs. Persia hopes, with the assistance of the brilliant officers of Your Majesty, to receive the help promised by you in the shape of Military stores, to overcome its enemies for all time. May God bless the sacred cause for which our country is fighting.  
— Nizam-Sultana. 2

The German Minister for Foreign Affairs was instructed to reply to Nizām us-Saltānah as follows:

I thank your Excellency for the news of your appointment as Commander-in-chief of Persian National Army. I am sure that with the help of the patriots

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1. Sipih, 309; I'zām Qudsī, 337.
  2. "The Times", April 17, 1916; Persian text, Sipih, 309.

and the brave Persian troops you will succeed in restoring the glorious past of Persia, so that she may occupy her proper position among the other nations of the world. The sending to Persia of von der Goltz Pasha and other German officers proves that the German Government is willing to show every sympathy with your efforts. Let all Persian patriots be assured that the Imperial Government will render the Persian nation the most active assistance, with the object of procuring its national independence which has been threatened for centuries by the enemies of Persia. Germany wishes — and prays — for the Triumph of the Persian troops. —  
 Wilhelm 1

Nizām us-Saltānah, in another telegram to Enver Pasha, the Turkish Minister for War, informed him of his appointment and expressed his intention of fighting against the enemies of Islam and asked for military assistance. Enver Pasha, in his reply, congratulated him on his appointment and stated that the union of both nations against their common enemy would result in their victory and added they would assist him as far as possible.<sup>2</sup>

It was the time for Nizām us-Saltānah to take some action to control affairs. He found the presence of Iqbāl ud-Daulah, the central government's representative, unnecessary; therefore, he was asked either to co-operate with the provisional government or to leave the city. The governor preferred the second alternative; he moved out of the city in preparation for his journey, but he was kept under restriction.

Nizām us-Saltānah arrived in Kermanshah with an escort of 200 men and was warmly received by the Muhājirīn and inhabitants of the region. The only hope of the provisional government and the Muhājirīn was military assistance from the Germans and Turks. Everyone expected

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1. "The Times", April 17, 1916; Persian text, Sipih, 309-10.  
 2. Sipih, 309.



an imminent arrival of Central Power troops; but except for 1500 Turkish troops, they received no more help. Dr. Vassel, in an official letter, encouraged him in his intention and informed Nizām us-Saltānah:

Sanneh, le 31 janvier 1916

Excellence,

Le Gouvernement Impérial d'Allemagne vient de me charger télégraphiquement de vous exprimer tous ses vœux pour la formation d'un gouvernement national et de vous communiquer que nous sommes prêts à vous secourir le plus énergiquement.

Le Gouvernement Impérial avait donné à Son Excellence Mustaufi al Mémalek dernièrement la déclaration formelle suivant que je suis autorisé à vous répéter et à confirmer officiellement:

Le Gouvernement Impérial garantit qu'après une guerre victorieuse il défendra et sauvegardera lors des négociations de paix, l'intégrité territoriale ainsi que l'indépendance politique et économique de la Perse à condition que la Perse ait participé à la guerre contre l'Angleterre et la Russie.

Les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Turquie avaient chargé leurs représentants à Téhéran de remettre des déclarations identiques à la nôtre. L'œuvre nationale et patriotique de votre Excellence se trouve ainsi entourée de toutes les garanties d'ordre international que les patriotes persans semblaient désirer.

Je profite de cette occasion pour répéter à Votre Excellence les assurances de ma haute considération.

(gez.) Vassel  
etc. etc.

Son Excellence  
le Chef des Forces Nationales de Perse  
Nisam es Saltaneh 1

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1. Gehrke, II, 339.

The Fight at Asadābād

The fall of Hamadan and hasty withdrawal of the gendarmes, nationalists, tribal savars and about 200-300 Turkish troops was a great embarrassment to the anti-Allied groups. They retreated in two directions, some groups to Pul-i Shikastah, 19 km south-west on the Hamadan-Malāyīr road; the rest of the forces withdrew to the Asadābād pass, at the town of the same name, 54 km south-west of Hamadan on the Kermanshah-Hamadan road.

At Pul-i Shikastah, the anti-Allied forces were able to resist the pressure of Russian troops for three days and then had to retreat to Malāyīr, 85 km from Hamadan. They were followed by the Russian troops and at any suitable location fights occurred between the two groups.

At the Asadābād pass, the National Army and Turkish troops possessed a stronghold and from a military aspect this was the only advantage they had over the Russian troops. As a matter of fact, they were short of all military and living facilities. The region of Asadābād is one of the coldest parts of Iran and especially in winter everything comes to a standstill for months. The pass was covered with heavy snow that year. But the gendarmes had not even received proper winter uniforms and many of them were still wearing their summer clothes.

The British War Office was pressuring the British Government to encourage the Russian Government to instruct General Baratof to push his army to the Turkish frontiers.<sup>1</sup> The Russian Government also desired their troops to join the British forces at Baghdad.

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1. F.O. 371-2437. No. 2907. F.O., Dec. 5, 1915. Cypher. To Buchanan.



Simultaneously, General Baratof received reinforcements and instructions from Russia; therefore, the Russian troops, in spite of unsuitable conditions, used all their ability to push from Asadābād to Kermanshah and then Baghdad. Some heavy fighting occurred and on 17th January the Russian troops were able to push the National Army back and to occupy the town of Asadābād.

### The Conflict at Bīd-i Surkh

The next National Army strategical point was at Bīd-i Surkh. The city of Kangavar became the advance battlefield for both sides. There was a heavy concentration of various forces at Bīd-i Surkh. The gendarmerie forces were about 3000 men and there were about 5000 or 6000 from tribal and other armed groups. They had come from Azarbaijan, Luristan, Isfahan, Tehran and Kermanshah. Some special forces had also been organised by the parties and paid by the Germans, such as Ṣāhib Zamānī and Nādirī<sup>1</sup>; they took part in the fight at Bīd-i Surkh. Nizām us-Saltānah also arrived at Bīd-i Surkh with three or four thousand men. Ṣāḥnah became his headquarters. The Turkish assistance at Bīd-i Surkh was over 1500 men. The general idea was that it might be possible to protect Kermanshah for some time until assistance was received from Germany. Nizām us-Saltānah, in a telegram to Ḥusayn Qulī Khān Navvāb, the Iranian Minister in Germany, who had sympathy with the nationalists and was co-operating

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1. Mr. Khusravī, was one of the Nādirī savars. He took part in the fight of Bīd-i Surkh. In a reconnoitre operation with a group of his fellows, they were ambushed by Russian troops, and had to retreat quickly. The group had some casualties and Mr. Khusravī was shot in the leg and taken to headquarters before being sent to Kermanshah. Personal interview with Mr. Khusravī, 17/11/2536; see Appendix II.

with Taqīzādah in Berlin, described the situation and asked him to negotiate the nationalists' proposals:

La condition proposée à savoir: l'entrée de la Perse en guerre a été réalisée depuis deux mois. Moi et tous les citoyens indépendants de la Perse nous combattons avec toutes les forces indisponibles.

Je vous pris d'obtenir sans aucun délai la garantie sans condition de l'indépendance politique et économique de la Perse. En stipulant l'indépendance économique de la Perse, il est indispensable d'obtenir l'annulation de tous les traités, conventions, concessions contractés avec les gouvernements et les ressortissants russes, anglais, française et belges aussi bien que l'annulation des dettes antérieures de la Perse. Il faut obtenir aussi la garantie pour l'abolition des capitulations et la modification du tarif douanière avec toutes les puissances, aussi bien que la garantie pour l'envoi des troupes, armes, munitions et les dépenses de guerre en fixant le montant et le date des paiements.

Jusqu'ici il n'est arrivé comme secours que deux mille soldats ottomans et cinq cents fusils vieux systèmes. Les Russes ont envoyé de nouveau de grand nombre de troupes et exercent de forces pressions.

Si l'assistance de troupes et d'armes ne nous arrivent pas bientôt, la situation deviendrait grave et critique.

Je vous (fehlt, pris?) de faire de sérieux efforts pour expédition immédiate de Berlin, de Constantinople et de Baghdad des troupes allemandes et turques, armes et munitions.

Je suis en train de former gouvernement provisoire des "Leaders" des partis et des fractions. 1

The Germans used all their efforts to build up fortifications at Bīd-i Surkh, including a system of trenches about 20 km in length. The Germans kept their government under pressure to send military aid to Iran as soon as possible. Although the German Government despatched military aid two or three times to Iran, the Turkish Government

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1. Gehrke, II, 340.



believed their army in Mesopotamia were more in need of aid and did not allow the assistance to reach Iran. It was a matter of extreme annoyance to the German officers and political representatives, particularly Count Kanitz, who had made a great number of promises. The German officers were well aware that if they did not receive adequate assistance, it would not be possible to hold Bīd-i Surkh for very long.

Since the arrival of Colonel Popp and his mission, the colonel had taken over command of German military advisers in Iran and directed the military operations. He stopped the lavish spending which Count Kanitz had done. Count Kanitz, the military attaché who was in charge of all German military operations in Iran, realised that in spite of his utmost efforts he had been totally unsuccessful. One night, in company with a savar and a gendarmerie officer, he arrived at a village. He wrote some letters and sent his companions away on the pretext of submitting those reports to Colonel Popp. As soon as Colonel Popp received the letters he realised that Count Kanitz intended to commit suicide. The colonel and some other German officers immediately went to the village but Count Kanitz had left his room, taking only his gun, and he never came back again.<sup>1</sup>

Kangavar became the next stage of fighting. The town was captured and recaptured by both sides several times. The confrontation lasted for some weeks. It was unexpected for the Russians; however, they planned to go around Bīd-i Surkh from Malāyīr via Nihavand, 64 km south-west of Malāyīr. The city was occupied by the Russians on

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1. Rizāqulī Qā'immaqāmī, a lieutenant, was the gendarmerie officer with Count Kanitz that night. He has explained the incident in detail in his book, op. cit., 170-86.

13th February 1916. The National Army at Nihavand was not strong enough to resist; a heavy invasion of Russians and some carelessness by the Swedish officers commanding the National Army caused the collapse of the Nihavand front. The Russians attacked on both fronts. Some groups of tribes from Luristan left the front. The gendarmes and Turkish troops had to bear the most pressure from the Russian bombardment. Kangavar was occupied by Russian troops and the main battlefield became Bīd-i Surkh. Both sides received heavy casualties. The Turks had great losses. It was estimated that the Russians had 30,000 men who had taken part in the fight. The National Army could not resist any longer and had to retreat to Şāḥnah and then to Bisitūn, 30 km away on the Hamadan-Kermanshah road, which was occupied by the Russians by 25th February. The fall of Kermanshah was imminent. The Russians took precautions in approaching the city. The gendarmes confronted them once more around Bisitūn just to give time for the evacuation of Kermanshah. The Russian commander informed the inhabitants of the city that if they resisted, the Russian troops would destroy the city. Some of the 'ulamā' and leaders of the community met the Russian commander and welcomed him to the city. The Russians occupied Kermanshah on 27th February 1916. They announced martial law and issued a proclamation on the city's and region's affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The Russian forces immediately followed the Muhājirīn. Once more, the Muhājirīn had to stand all the difficulties of a journey, but this time food was in fact very scarce. They withdrew as far as Kirind, 99 km from Kermanshah; they stayed there one or two days and

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1. One of the Russian proclamations may be found in Appendix I.



then proceeded to Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. This time they fortified Pataq, a stronghold between Kirind and Sarpul-i Żahāb on the Kermanshah-Qaṣr-i Shīrīn road. Now the situation had become very serious for the Turks too. They tried to spare some forces and despatched them to Iran. A few divisions arrived in Iran, hoping to deter the Russians' advance for some time.

Qaṣr-i Shīrīn was the last point for the Muhājirīn in Iran. The city was overcrowded and a shortage of food threatened both the Muhājirīn and the inhabitants of the city. The leaders of the Sanjābī tribe endeavoured to assist and supplied food for some weeks. Later on, on the recommendation of the 'ulamā' of Najaf, the governor of Pusht-i Kūh sent some caravans of provisions to Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, which helped the inhabitants of the city a great deal.

Meanwhile, the last group of Muhājirīn from Isfahan, after some weeks of very bad conditions, arrived in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. Shāhzādah Sulaymān Mīrzā, the leader of the Democrats, Mudarris and some other nationalist leaders were in this group.

The Iranian New Year passed without much enthusiasm. The political discord between the parties increased day after day. Nizām us-Saltānah was blamed for being inactive. There was even an attempt on his life. Everyone was depressed and worried. The future seemed as dark as ever. A broadsheet was distributed in the city, indicating the attitude of some of the Muhājirīn. It was entitled "Logical Statements", and started with a question, "For whom and for what?" It criticised the Muhājirīn bitterly. It looked at the whole story of the Muhājirat and stated that a group of people had been waiting to find an opportunity to take revenge on their old enemies and to do something for their country's future; then the war started and the enemies became involved.

Meanwhile, the Germans, Austrians and Turks used any persons, parties, nations and governments for their interests. These simple people thought their enemies would be defeated, but they were wrong and had been deceived. The writer referred to the condition of the country and what the Muhājirīn had achieved. Hundreds of youths had been killed, the country's only force, the gendarmerie, was disorganised, the Muhājirīn had left their families and jobs and tolerated horrible conditions and now they were observing the annihilation of their country. The writer repeatedly stated that people had the right to ask "For whom and for what?" Was it for the independence of the country? If so, by what treaty and who had guaranteed it? Or was it for the sake of the Germans and Turks? Had they made any convention? The writer complained bitterly and alluded to the Central Powers' promises and asked which of their promises had been fulfilled; where was their financial assistance? Where were the German officers and armaments? Why did the gendarmes not have proper uniforms? Why did they have to clean Colonel Popp's house or pick up stones from the roads? He addressed the 'ulamā' and members of the Majlis and pointed out that it was time to find an answer; if those people were not able to serve their country, then they should not be used only for the interests of two or three persons.<sup>1</sup>

The broadsheet was unexpected and shocked the Muhājirīn. It openly attacked the leaders of the Muhājirīn and Germans. However, it created a new wave of activities and resulted in an agreement between parties and also a general agreement between all groups and individuals. Some of the Muhājirīn, such as Mīrzā Karīm Khān Rashtī

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1. Daulatābādī, III, 366-67.



and Yahyā Daulatābādī, acted as mediators and brought about the means of an alliance between the Muhājirīn. Although the latter person was discouraged, on 21st Jumādā ul-Avval 1334/26th March 1916 an agreement was signed between the leaders of the Democrat and Moderate Parties. The introduction referred to past experiences and the importance of the present situation of the country. It was necessary for all political parties to join together as a national power for as long as the war continued and Iranian territory was being violated by the enemy. The members would take an oath to fulfill their national duties. The agreement consisted of seven points, the most important of which were as follows:

- 1) The purpose of this holy alliance is to protect the independence and integrity of Iran, to detain the influence, domination and violation of the enemy, and to safeguard the foundation of Islam.
- 2) The agreement will last until six months after the general war and the release of the territory of Iran from enemy hands.
- 3) From the signing of this document until the expiry of the agreement all organisations of both the Moderate and Democrat Parties should be dissolved and the establishment of any parties or committees under any name by these parties is forbidden. All former parties or committees which have been organised should be disbanded and all the members of both parties and other parties or groups will unite under the name of "Defenders of the Homeland" party. 1

The agreement was general and was approved by other groups.

Nizām us-Saltānah also was under pressure to conclude a treaty with the Germans and Turks, in the name of the National Government of Iran. Consequently he had to form his cabinet as soon as possible. Nizām us-Saltānah rearranged the candidates for ministries several

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1. Hājī Mīrzā 'Alī Muḥammad Daulatābādī, "Ṣūrat-i Mu'āhidah-i Hizbayn", "Vahīd", Nos. 250-251, March 1979, 78-83.

times. The final form of the cabinet, which in fact was formed when the Muhājirīn returned to Iran later on, was as follows: Nizām us-Saltānah, leader and commander-in-chief; Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān Kulūb (Farzīn), Finance; Adīb us-Saltānah (Samī‘ī), Interior; Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris, Justice; Mīrzā Qāsim Khān Tabrizī (Sur-i Isrāfīl), Post and Telegraph; ‘Izz ul-Mamālik Ardalān, Trade and Public Utilities; Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān Māfī, Foreign Affairs. Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, the leader of the Moderate Party, and Vahīd ul-Mulk were appointed as the National Government's representatives in Istanbul and Berlin. Each man was responsible for his post; although they did not officially use the title "minister" , in general they were called thus. The German and Turkish representatives reassured the Muhājirīn that their governments would assist the nationalists to defend their country as much as possible.

It was obvious that the military situation at Pataq was not satisfactory. Sufficient military assistance did not arrive. The Germans also were not able to cope with the financial demands of affairs. They allowed some of the tribal groups to leave the city for their own regions. The Swedish officers were permitted to leave for Sweden. The German and Turkish representatives informed Nizām us-Saltānah that it would be better for the Muhājirīn to be prepared to leave the city for Baghdad.

The military operation at Pataq overshadowed the political activities at Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. The Russian troops had been held at Pataq for nearly a month. All available forces had taken part in the fight; the Sanjābī tribes in particular had shown remarkable resistance. The Turks could not send reinforcements and the army lacked ammunition. Consequently they had to retreat. Qaṣr-i Shīrīn was not safe any



longer. The Muhājirīn hastily left their country sadly. The Turkish representatives indicated that the Muhājirīn would be guests of the Turkish Government and would receive financial assistance.

The city was in a panic. The destiny of the Muhājirīn was unknown. The tribesmen left the city for the mountains; many of the gendarmerie forces preferred to be scattered around until they could find a way back to their cities. The entire National Government, both military and civil administration, was disbanded. The leaders, members of the Majlis, and high-ranking nationalists, whose lives would be in serious danger if they were captured by Russian forces, left the city for Baghdad. Many of the nationalist leaders joined tribal nomads for better opportunity. On 3rd May Russian troops occupied Sarpul-i Żahāb, 30 km from Qaşr-i Shīrīn, and on 7th May Qaşr-i Shīrīn was occupied by them.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RETURN OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO IRAN

#### Allied Domination in Tehran

Everything seemed in favour of the Allies in Tehran. In fact, as Mr. Marling reported, "Russian troops were in practical occupation of the Capital."<sup>1</sup> There was no opposition in the capital to counter the Allies' desires. The Majlis was closed and hostile newspapers were suspended. Farmān Farmā did his best to please the Allies. He instructed the governors in the provinces that by order of the Shah, the Russian troops were pursuing the rebels and there should not be any hostile attitudes against them.<sup>2</sup> The next step against the Muhājirīn was taken on 29th January; the Prime Minister was instructed to discharge Nizām us-Saltānah from his position. He was the Governor-General of Burūjird, Luristan and Khuzistan (Arabistan).<sup>3</sup>

Although the Iranian Government inclined towards the Allies, the Allies themselves paid little attention to the government. As a matter of fact, the government's proposal for an alliance did not receive much attention from its two powerful neighbours. There was no reason at that time to offer Iran considerable advantages, as the country was totally in their hands. Therefore, the question of an alliance as such was not pursued at the time.

The prestige of the Iranian Government was let down by its friendly neighbours, especially in the incident of the Turkish Ambassador.

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1. F.O. 416-66. No. 105. Aug. 26, 1916. Gulhak, Marling to Grey.  
2. I'zām Qudsī, I, 322.  
3. Sipīhr, 320.



As opposed to the German Minister, Prince Reuss, who did not return to the capital, and in spite of the Iranian Government's assurances, the Turkish and Austrian Ambassadors returned to the capital on 24th November 1915, and took charge of their legations.

On 11th February, the capital was shocked by the news that the Turkish Ambassador, 'Āsim Bey, and his companions the Austrian military attaché, a German professor and an Austrian dentist, who had been hunting in the suburbs of Tehran, had been captured by Russian troops. It was a matter of serious anxiety and it grew worse when the Russians identified them and announced that they had no intention of releasing them. The Turkish and Austrian Legations strongly protested to the Iranian Government, which was responsible for the safety of foreign representatives as it was a neutral country. Diplomatic communications passed between the belligerent legations and the Iranian Government. Finally, the Russians declared that they would despatch the Ambassador via Russia to Sweden.

"Ruski Slov" reported the incident and wrote that the Russian Government had instructed its representative in Tehran to inform the Iranian Government that the Turkish Ambassador had been captured in circumstances which would leave no reason for the Iranian Government to protest. Firstly, they were in the Russian military region; secondly, his companions had been escaped prisoners from Russian camps; thirdly, one of his companions was a military envoy of a hostile country.<sup>1</sup>

"The Near East" also commented on the incident and, with disregard for the neutrality of Iran, stated: "The capture of Assim Bey, the Turkish Ambassador to Persia, and Austrian military Attache will

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1. Sipih, 325.

deprive the insurrection of at least one figurehead and possibly of a useful leader."<sup>1</sup>

Concerning Iranian public opinion, the Russian action was extremely unpopular, but due to the presence of Russian troops, there was no strong reaction. The capital's newspapers considered it a regrettable incident; even the pro-Allied newspaper "'Aṣr-i Jadīd" considered it as astonishing, something which had not happened before in diplomatic history. The writer expressed his regret and stated, "Nowadays things have gone beyond international regulations and the foundation of all activities is force."<sup>2</sup>

Although Farmān Farmā's cabinet had no opposition, nevertheless the Russians were not satisfied with him and brought about the means for his resignation. Apparently, the discord between Farmān Farmā and the Russian Minister concerned the negotiations of Mazandaran Petroleum and Pīr-Bāzār-Rasht's railways, about which Farmān Farmā seemed not to have a friendly attitude.<sup>3</sup>

About 200 men and women took bast (sanctuary) at the Russian Legation. They demanded the government's arrears. It was said that they had been paid to protest against Farmān Farmā's cabinet.<sup>4</sup> However, the main reason for the fall of Farmān Farmā, as Mr. Marling reported, was "his Highness's boundless rapacity."<sup>5</sup> He indicated that there were grounds for the Russian Minister's suspicions, for "the Prime Minister [had been] spreading abroad accounts, unfortunately well founded, of his Highness's malpractices."<sup>6</sup> The British Minister

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1. "The Near East", Feb. 18, 1916.

2. "'Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 57, Feb. 12, 1916/Rabī' us-Sānī 8, 1334.

3. F.O. 416-64. No. 36. Tehran, March 24, 1916. Marling to Grey.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.



personally warned Farmān Farmā about his attitude but it was totally useless and he continued to ask the Russians for the same request<sup>1</sup> which he had received from the British; but it was not pleasant for the Russian Minister. At any rate, Mr. Marling believed that, concerning Farmān Farmā's efforts in the Allied interests, particularly during the previous summer and autumn, the Russian Minister's justification was not right. Later on, after the fall of Farmān, both ministers were agreed that Farmān Farmā "is a far more capable instrument with which to achieve the aims of two Powers."<sup>2</sup> However, the fall of Farmān Farmā was inevitable. Being aware of that, on 29th February 1916, after almost two months, he submitted his resignation to the Shah. It was accepted immediately. The Tehran newspapers commented on the resignation and considered it a misfortune. "Ra'd" stated that Farmān Farmā was an experienced politician and admired his activities and opinions, especially during the war.<sup>3</sup>

#### Sipahsālār's Cabinet

It was not surprising that Sipahsālār was asked to form his cabinet immediately after the fall of Farmān Farmā. Although Sipahsālār was the Minister for War in Farmān Farmā's cabinet, from the beginning he had showed disagreement with the Prime Minister. Apparently the differences between them occurred over the finance of the Ministry for War, as Sipahsālār required much more than the government could afford. Therefore, Sipahsālār did not take part in cabinet sessions. M. Kozminski, the Russian commercial agent, and Shāhzādah Kāshif

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1. See Chapter III, 276.

2. F.O. 416-64. No. 36. Tehran, March 24, 1916. Marling to Grey.

3. Sipahr, 326; "'Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 65, March 2, 1916/Rabī' us-Sānī 27, 1334.

us-Saltānah were two persons who brought about the means of Farmān Farmā's fall. The former increased the suspicions of the Russian Minister in Tehran against Farmān Farmā and, with the co-operation of the latter, managed the bast of a group of people at the Russian Legation. Consequently, Farmān Farmā realised that he no longer had Russian support.

Muhammad Valī Khān Tunkābunī, Sipahdār A'zam, had recently been honoured with a higher title by the Shah, that of Sipahsālār A'zam. On 3rd March 1916, he was instructed by the Shah to form his cabinet. Two days later he introduced his cabinet as follows: Sipahsālār A'zam, Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior; Sārim ud-Daulah, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Sardār Kabīr, Minister for War; Sardār Manṣūr, Minister for Post and Telegraph; 'Alā' ul-Mulk, Minister for Justice; Muntāz ul-Mulk, Minister for Sciences; Ḥājī Yamīn ul-Mulk, Minister for Finance; Ḥājī Mushīr A'zam, Minister for Commerce and Public Utilities; Kāshif us-Saltānah was also installed as the deputy for the Ministry for the Interior. The British Minister at Tehran reported that "Sipahsalar, as Minister of the Interior used position and power solely to further his personal interests and those of his entourage."<sup>1</sup>

"'Aṣr-i Jadīd" published a long flattering article about Sipahsālār and the members of his cabinet. The ministers were individually admired for their ability and patriotism.<sup>2</sup> "The Times" wrote: "Sipahsalar Azam as Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior ... is a Russophil."<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 104. Aug. 25, 1916, Gulhak. Marling to Grey.

2. "'Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 68, March 7, 1916/Jumādā ul-Avval 2, 1334.

3. "The Times", March 10, 1916.



In fact, Sipahsālār relied absolutely on the Russians and did not pay much attention to the British. As long as he had the full support of the Russians, he was safe. This attitude was a matter of embarrassment to the British Minister at Tehran. The British requested the arrest of exile of some politicians and leaders, such as Mukhbir us-Salṭānah, Zāhir ul-Mulk and Sardār Şaulat Bakhtiyārī, and some others. It seemed the British expected too much from him. However, Sipahsālār ordered the arrest of 'Alī Khān Siyāh Kūhī, one of the commanders of the National Army, at Rubāṭ Karīm and he was held in the Prime Minister's house. Farmān Farmā, the most implacable foe of Sipahsālār, was appointed Governor-General of Kerman in order to keep him far from the capital. Mr. Marling expressed his opinion about Sipahsālār as: "In spite of 70 years and great experience, Sipasalar is hopelessly ignorant, and is vain, capricious, lazy and easily influenced by those who have his ear."<sup>1</sup> Due to the Allied Legations' request the properties of Nizām us-Salṭānah were confiscated by the Iranian Government.<sup>2</sup>

Sipahsālār openly threw in his lot with the Russians. As Mr. Marling wrote, "he was content to observe a blind obedience to Russian behests."<sup>3</sup> General Baratof invited him to visit Qazvin. He received a military reception and observed the Russian troops' manoeuvres. General Baratof also was a guest of the Iranian Government and had an audience with the Shah, at which General Baratof and some of his officers received decorations from the Shah.

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 105. Gulhek, Aug. 26, 1916. Marling to Grey.

2. I.F.O. 1334., C. 26, f. 22, No. 2. dated Savar 2nd [1295 Shamsī], 1134 H.Q., No. 578.

3. F.O. 416-64. No. 105. Gulhek, Aug. 26, 1916. Marling to Grey.

The Iranian New Year passed without excitement. The Shah received telegrams of greeting from the British king, Russian emperor, presidents of the United States, France and other countries. The Russians also released Iranian captives who had fought against the Russians, with a large amount of publicity.

The country was in a state of total chaos; famine had already shattered the country. Azarbaijan was involved in a disastrous period; the region had been the battlefield of the Russian and Turkish armies, and conditions did not improve as killing, looting and destruction continued, and people wandered from one city to another. There was no hope. The north-east and south-east had been under Russian and British fire. In the south, General Sir Percy Sykes had organised the South Persia Rifles and had started his military operations against the opposition.

#### The Mixed Financial Commission

The political atmosphere in Iran was perfectly suited for the Allies to put demands to the Iranian Government. The presence of Russian troops at the gates of Tehran and the Iranian Government's devotion to the Allies had produced a satisfactory condition for the Allies to enact any plan.

The proposals of Mustaufi ul-Mamalik and his successor, Farmān Farmā, for an alliance with the Allies was at the time out of the question. The British and Russian Governments saw no reason to offer Iran any advantages at all; on the contrary, it was an opportune time to receive some as well.

The only Allied assistance to Iran was 200,000 tūmāns, the credit of the moratorium. From the Iranian Government's point of view, it



was the sole income of the country, and consequently was vital to the government. The Allied Ministers at Tehran used this point as a key to control the Iranian Government, simply by ordering the bank to suspend the money.

As long as there was a possibility that Iran would be dragged onto the Central Powers' side, the payment of the moratorium deterred the Iranian Government from further inclination to them. But now, nothing threatened the Allies' influence over the government. The Iranian cabinet had no alternative but to look forward to Allied assistance. Therefore, the Allies desired to obtain more privileges instead of their financial help. They informed the Iranian Government that they understood that there was mismanagement in the expenditure of their assistance; therefore, they suggested the formation of a Mixed Financial Commission composed of Iran-Allied representatives to control the expense of the sum of the moratorium. The British and Russian Ministers insisted on this request.<sup>1</sup> On 27th April the Iranian Government agreed to the Allies' demand.<sup>2</sup>

"Novoye Vremya" commented on the formation of the Mixed Financial Commission and stated that the Iranian Government had spent a part of the money which it had received from both governments for necessary tasks, but the other part had been looted by government envoys. The writer tried to show that the hopelessness of the Iranian Government forced them to ask for both powers' supervision, which resulted in the formation of a Mixed Financial Commission.<sup>3</sup>

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1. British letter: I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 42. 1334 H.Q. Dated 22 April 1916. Translation of the British Minister's letter to the Prime Minister. Russian letter: I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 4. 1334 H.Q. dated 22 April 1916. No. 1925.
  2. I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 5. 1334 H.Q. dated Savar 7 (1295); I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 7, 1334 H.Q. dated April 27, 1916. No. 585.
  3. "Novoye Vremya", quoted in "'Asr-i Jadid", No. 95, May 18, 1916/Rajab 15, 1334.

"‘Aṣr-i Jadīd" considered the Commission as the direct result of mismanagement of the country's finances.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission consisted of five members: Heynssens, chairman, from the Iranian Treasury, Belgian; Sardār Mu‘azzam, Iranian; Amīn ud-Daulah, Iranian; Model, Russian; Huson, British. The British member was later replaced by Maclean. The Commission had the authority to control the subsidy, 200,000 tūmāns, and its expenditure.

#### Return of the Muhājirīn to Kermanshah

In company with Turkish troops, the gendarmerie forces and the other nationalist groups who had withdrawn to Baghdad returned to Iran with the Turkish army. Once more, they fought against Russian troops in all battles. The anti-Allied tribes joined the Turks against the Russians. The leaders of the Muhājirīn and members of the Majlis returned to Iran, but some of the high-ranking politicians went to Istanbul and Germany or other countries.<sup>2</sup>

As soon as Nizām us-Saltānah and other members of his cabinet arrived at Kirind, his cabinet held a meeting and planned their program. Hājī Nāṣir us-Saltānah, the Governor of Kermanshah, who had succeeded Iqbāl ud-Daulah, had to leave the city. The National Government received a warm welcome in Kermanshah. The ministers energetically took charge of their administration. The immediate family of Nizām us-Saltānah received very important positions in the National Government. His oldest son, Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān, was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs; the other son, Muḥammad Taqī Khān, became his father's secretary, and Sālār Lashgar, his son-in-law and

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1. "‘Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 96, May 20, 1916/Rajab 17, 1334.

2. Daulatābādī, IV, 32-33; Divānbaygī, op. cit., 70.



the son of Farmān Farmā, was in charge of the War Ministry.<sup>1</sup> On the official papers of the National Government was printed the sign of the lion and sun (shīr and khurshīd) and "In the name of His Majesty Sultān Ahmad Shāh Qājār". The newspaper "Akhhār" was published.<sup>2</sup> Shīr-i Khurshīd-i Surkh was re-established and some hospitals were opened. Several schools were established.

There was also a German military mission with the Muhājirīn. The mission consisted of several officers under the command of Captain von Loeben. The purpose of the mission was to organise a new Iranian gendarmerie force, for the security of the region which was under the National Government's authority. The Turkish officers undertook to organise a National Army according to the Turkish military system. Both military organisations began their duties vigorously in the cities. Some centres for training volunteers were organised. Post and telegraphic communications reopened. The roads, which during the war went from bad to worse, were improved; the Kermanshah-Qasr-i Shīrīn road was rebuilt. The stocking of markets was resumed and transportation between cities was safe. The finance administration and collection of taxes was formed and put into effect. Law and order improved in the region. The Germans opened a German bank and issued notes, backed by silver. The financial assistance of the Germans to the National Government was 360,000,000 tūmāns per month.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The presence of Sālār Lashgar on the nationalists' side, opposing his father, Farmān Farmā, produced suspicions among the Muhājirīn. He was accused of reporting the Muhājirīn's affairs to his father. Blücher, 69; I'zām Qudsī, 336; Safā'ī, op. cit., II, 160; Divānbaygī, op. cit., 70.
  2. But as Pūrdā'ūd wrote: "The Turks also refused me permission for the publication of my journal 'Rastakhīz' as I did not support them in their scheme of Pan-Islamism, which to me appeared nothing more than a net of deception." Pūrdā'ūd, Pūrāndokht Nāmāh (Bombay, 1928), 6.
  3. Divānbaygī, op. cit., 64.

The National Government appointed governors for those cities which had been released from Russian occupation. The governors had proceeded to their posts and taken charge of their affairs without problem.

Dr. Vassel, the German Minister in Iran, was replaced by Nodolny, a German diplomat in the German Foreign Office, well-experienced in Iranian affairs. He arrived in Kermanshah and von Blücher was in his company as secretary. Nodolny had been informed in Istanbul by the German Minister in Turkey that the Turks did not have the same attitude towards Iran as the Germans had.<sup>1</sup> The Turks preferred to take the Middle East under their influence, especially Iranian affairs.

On the other hand, the Germans were well aware that the Iranian nationalists had always been suspicious of the Turks' attitude, and if they understood that there would be any problems in the future and the independence and integrity of Iran would be in peril, they might turn against the Central Powers. In fact the Iranian nationalists considered Germany as a guarantee against eventual Turkish aspirations.<sup>2</sup>

From a political point of view, the implication of the Central Powers' policy in Iran was to re-establish the independence and unity of Iran and to suppress the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. From a military point of view, the aim was to drive the Allied forces out of Iranian territory. Nodolny assured Nizām us-Saltānah in the name of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Germany had neither territorial nor political purposes in Iran or its neighbours to the east. The only aim of Germany was to establish relations with Afghanistan and to threaten India.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Siphr, 282-83.

2. Blücher, 62-63.

3. Siphr, 283.



Fauzī Bey, the Turkish military attaché, was the Turkish political representative in Kermanshah. The Turks' message to the Iranian people was through religion and the brotherhood of Islam. The 'ulamā' of Najaf and Karbalā' encouraged the Iranian leaders to unite Islamic believers. The nationalists had been more sensitive about the Turks' attitude about Pan-Turanism, which had caused anxiety to Iranian leaders through some parts of Iran, especially in Azarbaijan where the people were Turkish speakers. The Turkish political representatives tried to convince the nationalist leaders that the Turks had no intention whatsoever about Iranian territory.

As soon as the Turkish troops entered a city, they issued a proclamation that they came for the sake of Islam and to release their Iranian brothers, and they assured the people that there would be no damage to anyone. In Hamadan the Turkish commander-in-chief issued a proclamation, stating:

... the Islamic Turkish Government, for releasing of its Islamic neighbour Iran from the Russian oppression and for rescuing His Majesty Sultān Aḥmad Shāh from captivity, and security of independence of Iran and for assistance of Iranian people, an Islamic army under the command of myself was despatched to Iran.

The proclamation referred then to the fall of Kūt al-'Amārah and the aim of Russian troops to occupy Baghdad. The statement alluded to the Turkish military operation from Khānaqīn to Hamadan and strongly rejected the rumours that the Turks had charged the inhabitants of Kermanshah a great deal of money. The proclamation indicated that those rumours were from the Turkish enemy, the purpose being to create a bad expression from the Turkish forces and to deter Iranians from co-operating with the Turks. The proclamation referred to the war and defeat of Russian troops and then addressed the Iranians:

Today is the day on which Islam is developing and will be released from the unbelievers' pressure. The infidels will be defeated. The khalīfah of the Muslims and the kind of believers has declared a jihād. Taking part in jihād is obligatory; therefore, join our victorious army under my command to hunt down the remaining unbelievers from Islamic countries and purify Iran from their existence.

For the freedom of Iran, from the Commander of the Islamic army

‘Alī Iḥsān 1

But the chief of the Customs office in Kermanshah, in his report about Turkish activities in the city, wrote: "In a few days the amount of 3000 lirah and 800 kharvar of grain was imposed on the inhabitants in the name of contributions."<sup>2</sup>

#### Sipahsālār's Treaty

The formation of the Mixed Financial Commission was the beginning of further pressure for concluding a treaty between Iran and the Allies. It was the time to put in practice the Anglo-Russian convention of 1915. On 2nd August, 1916, the Iranian Government received a note from both legations in Tehran, indicating that:

The British and Russian Governments desire to assist the Iranian Government in maintaining law and order in the country and to make reform in the financial administrations. The Representatives who signed this note, have been permitted to convey to Your Excellency the following proposal.

A military force will gradually be organised, consisting of approximately eleven thousand men, for the above purpose, in the southern provinces of Iran.

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1. Sipīhr, 379-81; four days later another proclamation was issued containing nearly the same statements: I.F.O., C. 43, f. 10, No. 32. dated Sunday 27 Shavvāl [1334]. Enclosure of C. 43, f. 10, No. 31, dated Ẓī Ḥijjah 11, Mīzān, 17, 1334. Kārgużārī Qazvin to I.F.O.
  2. I.F.O., C. 44, f. 6, No. 6, 1135. dated Savar 10, 1296/March 25, 1917. No. 5382.



His Majesty's Government will put at the service of the Iranian Government sufficient numbers of high and low ranking officers, doctors and so on, for organising and training the force, and will undertake the mobilisation and maintenance of the force for at least the duration of the European war.

The Russian Government also required the same plan for the north of Iran. The Iranian Government was also asked to present after the war a list of the sources of its income for maintaining the forces. The note continued and referred to the financial administration and finance of Iran and stated that:

Both governments are willing to take under friendly consideration the Iranian Government's desires and they are certain that for improving the finances of Iran, it is necessary for the authority of the present Financial Commission to be extended considerably.

According to the Allies' suggestion the extension of the Commission would cover the total sources of income, taxation and regulation of finances of the country. Both governments had pointed out that the continuation of the subsidy depended on the acceptance of the above proposal.<sup>1</sup>

After a year or so negotiations for an alliance between Iran and the Allies turned out to be in three points, as follows:

- 1 - Formation for forces under British and Russian instruction in South and North respectively for preservation of order;
- 2 - Financial control;
- 3 - Susidy [for] the War. 2

The Russians were not willing to agree with these terms and delayed a long time, haggling over the number of the troops from 10,000 to

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1. I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 37. 1334. Translation. Aug. 2, 1916.  
 2. F.O. 416-64. No. 105. Gulhek, Aug. 26, 1916. Marling to Grey.

11,000. Mr. Marling complained about the Russians' delay, for "An alliance on the most favourable terms would have made our position perfectly safe."<sup>1</sup> The British and Russian Governments had the Iranian Government under pressure and demanded an answer in forty-eight hours.

No one, not even the Allied Ministers, expected to receive a satisfactory reply, perhaps even a protest. On 5th August 1916, the Iranian Government replied to the Allied proposals. After thanking the Allied Governments for their assistance and attention to the development of Iran, they informed the Allies that the Iranian Government had considered the proposals attentively and "due to the present situation would under force majeure accept."<sup>2</sup> The statement alluded then to the military forces which would gradually increase to 20,000 men under the supervision of the Ministry for War. Regarding finance, the government declared its concurrence with the financial reforms under the Mixed Commission, providing the Commission would not interfere in previous financial affairs. In conclusion, the government pointed out that according to Iran's constitution, the proposals should be approved by the Majlis when it was opened again.<sup>3</sup>

There was an enclosure with the Iranian letter which contained four articles about the authority of the Mixed Financial Commission. The most important points were as follows:

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1. Ibid.
  2. I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 43. 1334. dated Asad 14, 1334 (1295)/ Aug. 5, 1916.
  3. It was said that Sipahsālār understood that Farmān Farmā had been asked to conclude the treaty before, but he refused and said, "It would be a disgrace to the grandson of Nā'ib as-Saltānah, 'Abbās Mīrzā to sign the document of the slavery of Iran." This rejection of Farmān Farmā had been considered as the reason for his cabinet's fall. Ahrār, op. cit., II, 756.



Article One. The options and duties of the Mixed Financial Commission from the date of this order, Shavvāl 14, 1334, to rectify the order of 24 Šafar [1295/May 14, 1916].

- 1) Investigation and approval of total expenditure of the country.
- 2) Arrangement of income and expenses of the budget.
- 3) Precision and enactment of new taxation, which contains modification or reconsideration of the present taxation, either directly or indirectly, providing the country's customs, religious respect and conventions ...
- 4) Liquidation of the loans which are due in a short time.
- 5) Inspection and supervision of the total sources of the country's income ...
- 6) Approval or reconsideration of the decision of discharging and appointing of the envoys of the Finance administrations.

Article Two. The decision of the Commission will be adapted by a majority vote of the members.

Article Three. The regulations of the Commission depends on the members' decision ...

Article Four. The duration of the Commission is unlimited and could be cancelled by agreement of three parties. 1

It was an astonishing reply and the conclusion of the agreement surprised the diplomats at Tehran. Mr. Marling stated:

I must confess that even after Sarim ud-Daulah had brought me the Persia text of the proposed answer, I could scarcely bring myself to believe that the Cabinet would authorise its signature. The Agreement itself is virtually one for the administrative partition of the country, and the consideration given for this tremendous concession is no more than a monthly subsidy [sic] of 200,000 tomans for duration of the war. It seemed to me incredible that the Cabinet, with its subserviency, could find the courage to execute so unpopular an instrument. 2

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1. I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 37. dated Shavvāl 4, 1334/Aug. 2, 1916.
  2. F.O. 416-64. No. 105. Gulhek, Aug. 26, 1916. Marling to Grey.

"The Near East" reported the conclusion of the agreement and explained the reasons:

Persia's finances were in a hopeless condition, but it was evident that two interested powers could not come to her help until some security could be offered for the restoration and subsequent maintenance of law and order in the country. 1

The writer indicated that on this point the agreement had already been put in practice by the Russians and British in the north and south of Iran. On 15th September 1916, the newspaper, in an article about the state of affairs in Iran, alluded to the Viceroy of India, whose "Government with Persia had never been more cordial." Regarding the agreement the writer believed both governments had convinced the Iranian Government "of their solicitude for Persia's real interests," and the Iranian Government agreed with that. The writer concluded:

We need no longer think of the country as divided into three spheres, with the anomaly of the British being virtually shut out of the part which concerns them most. It is enough for the moment to think of Russia's interests being in the north, Great Britain's in the south. Any more definite demarcation can be settled at a later and more opportune time. 2

The "Manchester Guardian" commented on the agreement:

The first point in which the new Agreement is said to differ from 1907 one is that Persia is a party to it, not simply a victim of it. That is all to the good. The chief aims of the treaty are military and financial reform ...

Persia may well regard the new Agreement as a distinct improvement on the old. In 1907 Russia and England were concerned only to peg out claims in Persia and at the expense of Persia. The whole arrangement contemplated

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1. "The Near East", Aug. 11, 1916.

2. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1916.



the collapse of Persia and took no measures to avert it. The new Agreement — though it is far from ideal — does do something to strengthen the fabric of Persian society, and, if the Foreign Offices of Russia and England have wisdom, might prove the beginning of a regeneration of Persia. 1

Starting with the report to Petrograd of Colonel Prozorkevich, commander of the Iranian Cossack Brigade in the north, Miroshnikov commented on the formation of the force mentioned in the treaty:

"Only Sepahdar's cabinet which consisted of politicians who dared not oppose their premier who is in his turn worked on instructions of our (Russian — L.M.) and British diplomacy" could agree to the terms of the Anglo-Russo-Persian agreements concerning the creation of such police forces. 2

The Iranian newspapers, in spite of strict censorship, expressed their agitation against the treaty. "Irshād" wrote: "The whole Iranian undertaking and privileges which the Russians and British have received in Iran, practically [ensure that] Iran thenceforth is a protectorate of the British and Russian Governments."<sup>3</sup> "Āchiqsūz", a Caucasian newspaper, commented on the treaty in an article entitled "Russia — Britain — Iran", published on 10th August 1916. After referring to the recent treaty between Iran and both powers, in which the British and Russians would have supervision over military and financial affairs of Iran, the writer stated: "This news leaves no doubt that the Sipahsālār Government, as was well-known from the beginning, is sincerely pro-Russia and Britain." The writer continued that according to the treaty the Iranian Government should refer to the British and

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1. "Manchester Guardian", Sept. 4, 1916, quoted in "The Near East", Sept. 8, 1916; I.F.O., C. 24, f. 16, No. 29.
  2. Miroshnikov, op. cit., 63.
  3. "Irshād", No. 126, Sept. 30, 1916/ẓī Hījjah 1, 1334.

Russians if they wanted to borrow loans. If the government desired to increase the number of the country's forces, it had to ask its neighbours' opinion. If the government intended to employ foreign advisers, it must consult its "protectors". The writer alluded to the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 and stated that the British and Russians had always been endeavouring to pressure the Iranian Government to recognise the convention and in spite of their propaganda that the convention of 1907 was in the interests of Iran, nevertheless it had always been condemned by the Iranian Government and nationalists. Regarding the condition of Iran during the war the writer believed the attitude of the British and Russians was the main reason for the progress of German influence in Iran and agitation of the nationalists and parties against the British and Russians in Iran. In conclusion the writer indicated that after nine years, the British and Russians had finally achieved their purpose and pointed out that the Sipahsālār treaty in fact was an official recognition of the convention of 1907 by the Iranian Government.<sup>1</sup>

The translation of this article was published in "Ra'd" and created great tension in the capital. Sipahsālār was horrified and in a letter to the newspaper rejected the article, but that did not help. Amīn ud-Daulah, a member of the Commission, resigned. The treaty was considered a serious danger to the reign and independence of Iran.

Meanwhile, in the west of Iran, Turkish troops had had a great victory and were able to push back the Russian troops as far as Sulṭān Bulāgh pass, 200 miles from the Turkish border. The Russians had lost drastically their influence in the capital. The opposition raised

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1. "Āchiqsūz", quoted in "Ra'd", Shavvāl 1334, quoted in Sipih, 367.



their voices in protest against the treaty. The Shah refused to sign the agreement and Sipahsālār was called to the court and recommended to resign.

### The National Government and Central Powers' Agreement

The National Government realised that in spite of all negotiations, they had still not concluded any official agreement with the Central Powers. Therefore, the German and Turkish representatives in Kermanshah were under pressure to conclude a treaty. Nizām us-Saltānah, in his negotiations with Nodolny concerning political and economic affairs, referred to the treaty of Mustaufī ul-Mamālik, which Germany would have undertaken in case the Shah had declared war against the Allies. The Germans admitted that the National Government was at war at that time; however, Nizām us-Saltānah desired that the treaty should also include the case of the Shah remaining neutral.

Vahīd ul-Mulk, the National Government's representative in Berlin, used his utmost efforts to bring about the means for concluding a treaty as soon as possible. The Iranian Ambassador in Berlin also co-operated indirectly with Vahīd ul-Mulk. Taqīzādah and other Iranians in Germany supported the treaty. Finally, on 29th August, both sides had reached the following agreement:

- 1.) Recognition of the Provisionary Government under H.E. Nizam as-Saltaneh as the continuation or rather the emanation of the Mostoufi-al-Mimalik Government which was legally constituted to carry on negotiations and conclude a treaty with the Imperial German Government and its allies.

(The Turks have accepted this).

- 2.) Non-conditional guaranty of the political independence and territorial integrity of Persia and a formal promise to allow her a seat in the peace conference.

(The Turks have accepted this.)

3.) Formal cognisance of the Treaty concluded and signed at Teheran by Mostoufi-al-Mimalik and Mohtichmi-as-Saltaneh on the one side and the representatives of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey on the other.

(The Turks have accepted this.)

4.) Financial arrangements to be made in such a way to meet the ever increasing military and civil needs, expenditure to be entirely in the Persian hands under the surveyance of a German Controller.

5.) Necessity of founding and organising a military force after the old conscription system.

This force to be trained and led by German and Turkish officers and be well provided with arms and ammunition and funds.

6.) German agents to treat the Provisionary Government with due consideration.

7.) Necessity of removing discords and frictions between military and non-military elements and the desirability to give supreme power to the Diplomatic Agent.

8.) Necessity of dispatching a German force to Persia and Turkish forces operating in Persia.

9.) Facilities be granted for establishing telegraphic relations with Nizam-as-Saltaneh. 1

Regarding Article Three, which referred to the agreement between Mustaufi ul-Mamalik and the Central Powers and indicated that the treaty had been signed by them, there was strong doubt that the agreement actually had been signed by Mustaufi ul-Mamalik and Muhtashim us-Saltanah. Von Blücher stated that the negotiations between Prince Reuss and Mustaufi ul-Mamalik did not arrive at any guarantee because the conditions posed by the Germans for the entry into the war had not been fulfilled by those in control of Tehran.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, on 13th October 1916, there had been other negotiations on this ground,

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1. Gehrke, II, 358-59.

2. Blücher, 101-02.



which indicates that the treaty had not been signed by Mustaufi ul-Mamālik and the German Minister.<sup>1</sup>

The political friction between the Muhājirīn had been reduced but never disappeared. The rivalry between the leaders created some problems. Shāhzādah Sulaymān Mīrzā, the leader of the Democrats, did not take part in the cabinet. During the time at Baghdad, there was a rumour that Nizām us-Saltānah and Enver Pasha had concluded a secret agreement, which caused strong protests from the Muhājirīn. Nizām us-Saltānah had, in fact, sympathy with the Turks, which from the Democrat point of view was undesirable. However, in a general meeting Nizām us-Saltānah had to personally deny the matter but admitted that there had been some sort of negotiation.<sup>2</sup> In Kermanshah the difference still remained. Therefore, it was decided to put an end to the discord and prevent any further friction. The high committee of the Democrats and Nizām us-Saltānah signed an agreement on 26th August 1916. It consisted of an introduction and nine articles. The purpose of the agreement was the unification of forces and parties. The most important article was:

1. Mr. Nizām us-Saltānah and the Democrat Party believe in continuing their concordance with the Governments of Turkey and Germany and their allies till the policy of both governments and their allies are in agreement and in preserving the interest, independence and integrity of Iran.

The other articles were concerned with the reforms and re-establishment of the country's administration, the formation of military forces, supporting each other against opposition and so on.<sup>3</sup>

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1. "En ce qui concerne le désir exprimé par Son Excellence Wahid-el-Mulk, ..., il est à remarquer qu'il n'y a jamais eu de traité conclu avec Mustoufi-el-Memalek, mais qu'une déclaration a été faite à ce Ministre par les représentants de l'Allemagne, de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Turquie à Téhéran." Gehrke, II, 360.

2. I'zām Qudsī, 374.

3. Safā'ī, op. cit., II, 193-95.

The National Government and the central Government apparently had no connections, but when the Turkish troops threatened the capital, it is probable that the Shah asked Nizām us-Saltānah to use his influence to deter the Turkish advance on Tehran. Nizām us-Saltānah had asked Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī to put pressure on the Turkish Government to order the troops not to occupy Tehran.

The relations between the Turkish Government and Nizām us-Saltānah were encouraged when he received an ancient holy sword; it was despatched from Najaf by the 'ulamā' and was given to him in an enthusiastic ceremony at Kermanshah.

There had been another unsuccessful attempt on Nizām us-Saltānah's life in Kermanshah and this time, again, a group of radical Democrats had taken part in it.

#### The Evacuation of Tehran

The unexpected advance of Turkish troops changed the political climate in favour of the Central Powers in Tehran. The German and Turkish Legations at Tehran attracted the attention of politicians and courtiers. Sipahsālār's cabinet, due to his treaty with the Allies, was trembling and the advance of Turkish troops speeded up his fall. After six months and twenty-one days, on 12th August 1916, he had to resign. His treaty was disregarded by the Shah, though the British and Russians had already put it into practice. In the north Russian troops controlled the region and in the south Sir Percy Sykes had taken charge of a British force and was involved in military operations against the confederated khāns in the region. The foreign forces' operations in Iran had never been officially recognised until Sipahsālār's treaty.



Vusūq ud-Daulah was nominated by the Shah to form a cabinet. There was no protest from either Allied Minister in Tehran against the replacement of the cabinet. Vusūq ud-Daulah, on 12th August, received instructions for being appointed Prime Minister. From the beginning he faced great difficulties. The election of his cabinet was the first step. The Allies expected to see a pro-Allied cabinet but the political situation required the opposite. On the other hand, the only government income was received through the Allies. Mr. Marling expressed his opinion about the Prime Minister: "Vosugh ed-Doulah is a man of good sense, and well disposed to the two neighbouring Powers."<sup>1</sup> The Central Powers' Legations kept Vusūq ud-Daulah under pressure to appoint Mukhbir us-Salṭānah and Mustashār ud-Daulah as cabinet members. Therefore, Vusūq ud-Daulah preferred to delay the formation of his cabinet for a time.

As Turkish forces approached the capital, the Allied organisations were disturbed by people's requests. A rush to change bank notes held the bank management in extreme difficulty. The Loan Bank (Bānk Istighrāzī) was the worst hit. Thousands of people hurried to the bank to get their collateral properties out. They were afraid of the confiscation or looting of Allied properties, and thus their properties, by Turkish troops or others. The bank management was not able to cope with the people's demands and had to close, but in a proclamation assured the people that there would be no damage to their properties.

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1. F.O. 416-64. No. 104. Gulhek, Aug. 25, 1916. Marling to Grey. Miroshnikov, op. cit., 64-65, believed, "In any case, Vossug [ud-Daulah] can hardly be considered an Iranian patriot."

The Armenian community in Tehran also were in a panic. Some of the families had left the capital for the north. The Armenian representative had a meeting with the Prime Minister, Vusūq ud-Daulah, and expressed their anxiety about the arrival of Turkish forces in Tehran. The government issued a proclamation and indicated that the Armenians were Iranian citizens and were under the protection of the Shah; therefore, there was no cause for panic and anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, the Turkish Legation also issued a proclamation. After referring to the Turkish victory, it rejected the truth of the rumours in the capital and addressed the people: not only would the Turkish troops not harm anyone, but they would protect the people from any violation. The statement assured the people of the capital that there would be no problems from the Turkish troops.<sup>2</sup>

The Turkish troops had reached Sultān Bulāgh pass; if they seized the pass, Tehran would be in imminent jeopardy. Petrograd was under pressure to reinforce General Baratof, and the Russian Government tried to do so. A force consisting of 9,000 men was despatched to Iran. The Russian troops were, however, unable to resist strongly against the Turks. General Baratof confessed that the Russians had to retreat as far as the Turks advanced, anywhere, any time. He indicated that the capital was not safe. Later on he advised the Allied Ministers to evacuate Tehran and take precautionary measures. General Baratof pointed out that it was better for the Allied families to evacuate Tehran immediately.<sup>3</sup> The upheaval of the situation in Iran was a matter of annoyance to Petrograd and London. The British

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1. Sipih, 373.

2. Ibid., 372-73.

3. F.O. 371-2724. No. 536. Aug. 16, 1916. Decypher.



Viceroy in the Persian Gulf expressed the British anxiety and the consequence of the departure of the ministers from Tehran:

This would have most disastrous effect not only on the whole Persian situation but also in Afghanistan where it would be regarded as definite confirmation of repeated assurance of German mission that Turco-German Army is advancing across Persia on India. 1

The Viceroy suggested that the British Government should not agree with the evacuation of Tehran by the ministers. In fact the evacuation was most undesirable for the British Government; nevertheless, it instructed the minister at Tehran that they should stay in the capital as long as possible, but authorised him to take any necessary decision on the matter. Meanwhile, Sultānābād (Arāk) was evacuated by the Allies and the roads to the north became increasingly unsafe. On 17th and 18th August 1916, the Allied colonies left Tehran but the ministers decided to remain until the last moment. Due to the incident concerning the Turkish Ambassador, the Russian Minister was very sensitive about the danger from the Turks and the legation was on the alert.

From a political point of view, it was a crucial time in Tehran, The diplomatic relations between the belligerent countries and the court of the Shah were at their highest tension. The Allied Ministers were determined to press the Shah to accompany the ministers in case of their departure from Tehran. They frankly told the Shah, Mr. Marling reported, that:

We told His Majesty that if we did not learn from him this morning that he would leave with us we must inform our Governments that he had virtually decided to throw in his lot with our enemies. 2

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1. F.O. 371-2724. Tele. No. 522. Aug. 11, 1916. From Viceroy to Marling.
  2. F.O. 371-2724. No. 539. Aug. 19, 1916. Decy. Marling to Grey.

Both ministers also kept Vusūq ud-Daulah under pressure to prepare the means for an evacuation of the capital. On the other hand, the Central Powers' Legations used their efforts to deter the departure of the Shah. The Majlis was closed. The cabinet had not yet been formed. Finally, it was decided to call a committee composed of former ministers, members of the Royal family, nobles, politicians, members of the Majlis, 'ulamā' and merchants at the court to decide whether the Shah should leave the capital or not. The Allied Ministers were informed of the court meeting; therefore they despatched a letter to Vusūq ud-Daulah:

Le 18 août, 1916.

Mon cher Président du Conseil,

Je viens d'apprendre que Sa Majesté le Schah a donné l'ordre pour convoquer demain une réunion des Princes de la Maison Impériale, des Ministres et ex-Ministres et autres personnages marquants de l'Empire, qui doit donner à Sa Majesté un conseil sur la question si, dans le cas où les troupes turques menacent la capitale, Sa Majesté et le Gouvernement persan doit rester à Téhéran, ou se transporter dans un lieu sûr hors de l'influence ennemie. En la circonstance, nous croyons, mon collègue de Russie et moi, qu'il est de notre devoir d'exposer nettement l'importance capitale au'aura aux yeux de nos Gouvernements la décision à prendre par cette réunion. A leur avis, il serait impossible pour la Perse dans le cas prévu de maintenir une neutralité bienveillante si le Gouvernement et la Cour Impériale restaient à Téhéran; donc une décision comportant le séjour de Sa Majesté dans la capitale après le départ, dans les circonstances susmentionnées des deux légations, serait considérée comme portant atteinte à la politique de neutralité bienveillante dont nous avons eu les assurances personnelles de Sa Majesté le Schah à deux reprises.

Afin de ne laisser subsister aucun doute sur la manière de voir de nos Gouvernements, nous prions votre Altesse de vouloir bien nous rendre le service de soumettre à l'honorable Assemblée ce qui précède, et au besoin de lui donner lecture de cette lettre. Nous



prévoyons que les conséquences de l'attitude qu'on semblerait vouloir adopter envers nos pays à ce moment pourraient être fâcheuses pour la Perse à l'avenir.

Veuillez, etc.

CHARLES M. MARLING. 1

The British note was sent to the government the day before the meeting, but it did not have any effect on the process of the meeting. On 19th August 1916, at the court of the Shah, 35 persons took part. Vusūq ud-Daulah described the situation and asked for a decision. The result of a secret vote was 33 to 2 against the departure of the Shah. Vusūq ud-Daulah informed the Allied Legations:

August 19, 1916.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that to-day at the Palace of Sahib Keranieh a Great Assembly of Princes, clergy, and former Ministers was convened, and, in accordance with His Majesty's orders, considered whether, in view of recent events, His Majesty should move to another place or remain at Tehran. After consideration, secret votes were cast, and by a majority of thirty-three votes against two it was decided that His Majesty should remain at Tehran.

At the same time it was submitted unanimously to His Majesty that steps should immediately be taken to avoid the departure of the envoys of Great Britain and Russia and their Allies, and that the capital should not be brought into any kind of conflict, and should not be subjected to the incursions of foreign troops, so that all the foreign representatives and their subjects should be able to continue to remain at Tehran in security and honourably, and that the Persian Government and nation should as far as possible be freed from any difficulty on this account.

The Persian Government authorities, in order to carry out this proposal of the Grand Assembly, have at

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1. F.O. 416-64. Enclosure No. 1 in No. 26. Gulhek, Aug. 25, 1916. (No. 104). Marling to Grey.

once taken steps and measures, and will inform your Excellency of the result.

I avail, etc.

VOSUGH-ED-DOWLEH. 1

Simultaneously, it was decided that a mission composed of three politicians, Qavām us-Salṭānah, Muhtashim us-Salṭānah and Mūshāvar ul-Mulk, would visit ‘Alī Iḥsān Pāshā, the Turkish Commander at Hamadan. They tried to persuade him to avoid further advances towards Tehran. They indicated that Iran had always endeavoured to maintain its neutrality and in the case of Turkish troops advancing on the capital, the city would be a battleground between the forces; consequently, it might damage the friendly relations between the two Islamic countries.

On the other hand, Nizām us-Salṭānah used his influence through Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī, the National Government's representative at Istanbul, and Turkish and German diplomats at Kermanshah to ask the Turkish Government to detain the approach of Turkish troops towards Tehran.<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, the idea of an expedition to Iran, from the beginning, was considered as unwise and a big error; because, by sending a part of their Mesopotamian forces to Iran, the Turks weakened their front in Mesopotamia. Besides, as the Turkish troops penetrated farther into Iranian territory, they required more reinforcement. In fact, General Liman von Sanders, chief of the German military mission to Istanbul, had from the beginning been against the expedition to Iran. Enver Pasha had also been advised strongly by Hindenburg

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1. F.O. 416-64. Enclosure 2 in No. 26. Aug. 25, 1916. Gulhek (No. 104). Marling to Grey.  
 2. Dīvānbaygī, op. cit., 75.



and Ludendorf to withdraw the available forces for defending Baghdad<sup>1</sup>; but the Turks disregarded the Germans' view. Some Turkish military officers, such as Khalīl Pasha, shared the view of the English after their serious check at Kūt al-‘Amārah and no longer had the temerity to turn back to Baghdad.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Turkish troops made their winter camp at Hamadan and built some barracks. There was a general idea that after the end of the season and receiving reinforcements, they would advance on the capital. The Turks several times showed their military strength and advanced as far as 40 miles forwards, via Sulṭānābād and Sāvah, but they retreated to Hamadan.

Meanwhile, the Russian troops withdrew from Sulṭānābād. The Allied Legations had taken necessary measures. Both legations asked the United States Legation to take under its protection the Allies' interests in the capital and other cities where necessary. The British Government instructed its minister at Tehran, in case he had to leave and the Shah remained at Tehran, that there should not be a formal declaration of a breach of relations between the Allies and Iran.<sup>3</sup>

The stoppage of the subsidy by the Allies since the fall of Sipahsālār produced a great deal of problems for the government. Vuṣūq ud-Daulah was not able to continue his responsibility without money. Therefore, on 19th August he resigned. ‘Alā’ us-Salṭānah was nominated, but he strongly refused. However, a few days later, on 24th August, the Shah called Vuṣūq ud-Daulah and in spite of his

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1. Blücher, 96.

2. Ibid., 95.

3. F.O. 371-2724. No. 386. F.O., Aug. 20, 1916. Marling. Tehran.

refusal, the Shah insisted on his offer and Vusūq ud-Daulah had to accept.

The formation of the cabinet was a complicated task. Vusūq ud-Daulah, in a few meetings with the representatives of the British and Russian Legations at Tehran, convinced them that the circumstances required having some politicians like Muhtashim us-Saltanah in the cabinet. The representatives disagreed, but finally accepted.

Subsequently, on 28th August 1916, the entrance of Rumania into the war against the Central Powers changed the balance of power in the European war and produced difficulties in communications between Germany and Turkey. The immediate effect of the change in Tehran was that the Allies changed their minds and firmly asked for a pro-Allied cabinet.

At any rate, Vusūq ud-Daulah, on 29th August, introduced his cabinet members as follows: Mīrzā Ḥasan Khān Vusūq ud-Daulah, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Faṭḥ Allāh Khān Sardār Maṣṣūr, Minister for the Interior; Abū ul-Faṭḥ Khān Ṭabāṭabā'ī Ḥishmat ud-Daulah, Minister for War; Murtizā Khān Mumtāz ul-Mulk, Minister for Education; Dr. Ismā'īl Khān Amīn ul-Mulk, Minister for Post and Telegraph; Mīrzā Ḥasan Khān Mushār ul-Mulk, Minister for Finance; Fīrūz Mīrzā Nuṣrat ud-Daulah, Minister for Justice; Mīrzā Shukr Allāh Khān Qavām ud-Daulah, Minister for Commerce and Public Utilities.<sup>1</sup>

The government was involved in many difficulties and one of them was the problem of bread in the capital, which caused the bāzārs to close, and people gathered to ask for government intervention in the matter; they also requested the cancellation of Sipahsālār's treaty. Since

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1. As Colonel Petrozorkovich wrote, "The members of his cabinet are almost entirely if not our friends then in any case not our enemies." Miroshnikov, op. cit., 65.



the Iranian newspapers published the Russian newspapers' comments on Iran, Tehran was very tense. The people were reassured by the government authorities and denied the existence of such a treaty.

On 29th September 1916, the Iranian Prime Minister, Vusūq ud-Daulah, informed the Russian Legation at Tehran that he had read some articles in the Russian newspaper "Novoye Vremya" and "Ruski Slovo" which indicated that a treaty had been concluded between the British and Russian Governments and the Iranian Government, and implied that the Iranian Government had concurred with the British and Russian protectorate. The Iranian Government had no knowledge of such a treaty and Mufakham ud-Daulah, the Iranian Ambassador at Petrograd, had been instructed to reject the truth of the articles and to inform the Russian Foreign Office of the matter.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Zill us-Sultān, after visiting London and Petrograd, arrived in Tehran to use his influence for the British and Russian Governments in Iran. As he wrote to the British Foreign Secretary:

I also take the occasion to assure you once more of all my sympathy and friendship for your Government, which dates from many years, and to offer you also all my personal services, in Persia in the present crisis. I have also telegraphed to my friends and sons at Ispahan and Tehran, to remain at the disposal of the British and the Russian Ministers at Tehran, and to do their best in helping them if they are wanted ... 2

He was appointed as the Governor-General of Isfahan, Kāshān, Yazd and Gulpāygān and Khunsār.

General Sir Percy Sykes' forces had occupied Kerman and Yazd and joined the Russian troops at Isfahan.

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1. I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, 1334. dated Zī Qi'dah 30, 1334.

2. F.O. 371-2425. Nov. 22, 1915. Villa Marie, Nice.

The Fall of the National Government at Kermanshah

In January 1917, the news from Mesopotamia indicated a heavy concentration of British troops there. At the beginning the Turks did not pay much attention to the matter, but later on they found out the Turkish troops were not able to prevail against the British. The superiority of the British in both numbers and mobilisation made the Turks retreat from their position in the south of Mesopotamia. Subsequently Kūt al-‘Amārah collapsed and the British forces advanced towards Baghdad.

The change in the Mesopotamian situation produced a serious danger to the west flank of the Turkish troops in Iran. There was a possibility of their being cut off from the centre. ‘Alī Iḥsān Pāshā received orders to withdraw to Baghdad as soon as possible. It was absolutely unexpected. ‘Alī Iḥsān Pāshā retreated completely, without leaving behind anything or receiving serious damage. He was later promoted to general for his clean withdrawal. The Russians did not realise what was happening until the Turks were far away.

On 26th February 1917, the German representative at Kermanshah received a message: "Türkisches Corps mit deutschen Formationen räumt Persien. Schliesst Euch Rückzug an."<sup>1</sup> Blücher wrote:

Trotz der vorausgegangenen Andeutung traf uns dieser Funkspruch wie ein Blitz aus heiterem Himmel und zwar wie ein Blitz, der das ganze Bauwerk, an dem wir unter Einsatz aller Kräfte gearbeitet hatten, plötzlich in Flammen setzte. 2

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1. Blücher, 106.

2. Ibid.



For the National Government and the Muhājirīn, it was disastrous news. Their hopes vanished. The idea of leaving the country was absolutely intolerable. A cabinet session was immediately convened. The German explanation was:

Wir sind gezwungen, zeitweilig Persiens Gebiet zu räumen. In unserer Stellung zu Persien und in unserer Aktion tritt keine Änderung ein. Die Provisorische Regierung und die Abgeordneten lassen sich zeitweilig aus türkischem Gebiet nieder. Von den neugebildeten persischen Militärformationen sind wenigstens die Cadres geschlossen auf türkisches Gebiet zu überführen, um die Kontinuität der Aktion zu wahren. 1

The National Government, after discussing the situation, decided to leave the Muhājirīn free to make their own decision.

Hasty preparations started; the news in the city had the same effect. People rushed to the bank to change their notes and the bank worked from morning to evening to change notes for silver as long as was possible. The evacuation of the city started soon afterwards. All the administration collapsed, the forces were not willing to go to Turkish territory. The last stage was Qaṣr-i Shīrīn. About 400 Muhājirīn preferred to stay in Iran rather than go to Iraq. They were welcomed by the Sanjābī tribe. Their hosts were Sardār Nāṣir, Sardār Muqtadir, and Sālār Zafar, the sons of Samsam ul-Mulk, the leader of the Sanjābī tribe. Nizām us-Saltānah and some of his ministers, gendarmerie officers and many of the Muhājirīn went to Istanbul via Kirkuk. They received a warm reception and stayed in Istanbul. Life went on, but it was very difficult. The memoirs of the Muhājirīn indicated a period of hardship; even Nizām us-Saltānah and his family had a hard time.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Blücher, 107.

2. See Appendix I.

The Russian troops followed the Turkish troops as far as Qasr-i Shirin and through Turkish territory. The Russian Revolution disorganised the troops and they were instructed to withdraw from Iran. The Russian troops did not obey their officers any more. They did what they wished, and therefore the region was disturbed. Looting, killing and destruction dominated the west part of Iran as well as other parts. Subsequently, famine and epidemics killed hundreds of thousands of people.

The news of the Russian Revolution was the most delightful news for the Iranian people. The black sky of the Iranian future suddenly brightened with hopes of keeping the independence of their country. Perhaps Iran was the first nation and country which received tremendous benefit from every political and economic aspect, particularly being spared from definite colonisation.



## CONCLUSION

From a nationalistic point of view the importance of the Muhājirat and National Government of Kermanshah could be justified properly if the Russian Revolution had not occurred. In that case the Muhājirat might have been considered as the last general nationalistic effort of the Iranian people in defending the independence and integrity of Iran. It was the first time that the nationalists had used arms against the oppressive Russian and British policy in Iran.

From the British and Russian points of view, the fate and future of Iran and its people, according to the revision of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 in March 1915, was perfectly evident and clear. There was not even a chance of Iran being regarded as a protectorate, though it had already been divided into two spheres and the Russification of the northern part had been started. The south of Iran would probably have the same fate as India or other parts of the Persian Gulf.

Many of the inhabitants of the big cities, tribal chiefs and landowners were more or less aware of the prospect of Iran's future. Iran was on the edge of losing its independence. As far as the international experts and many of the Iranian politicians were concerned, it was just a matter of time before Iran would be engulfed by its powerful neighbours.

But the outbreak of the war changed this attitude. The Iranian people considered the evil of the war as the angel of freedom. Hope glinted in the hearts of the disappointed nationalists. Here was a glorious opportunity to protect their country from definite annihilation.

The first effort appeared in the freedom of the press, the opening of the Majlis and the formation of the cabinets of two famous politicians, Mustaufi ul-Mamalik and Mushir ud-Daulah. Both Prime Ministers, one after the other, did their utmost to bring about an agreement between Iran and both powers by which the independence and integrity of Iran would be guaranteed and the Allies would assist the Iranian Government to maintain its neutrality. Both Prime Ministers endeavoured to show the importance of Iran's role concerning the Middle East and India in the war, and to convince them that it was to their benefit as well as Iran's to come to a compromise with Iran. Not only did the Allies not consider Iran's request, but they followed a harder and harsher attitude which was shown by the replacement of both Russian and British Ministers in Tehran with two hard-liners. They immediately put the Shah under pressure to form a completely pro-Allied cabinet under the leadership of Sa'd ud-Daulah, increased the number of Russian troops in the northern part of Iran and disembarked British forces in the south. The formation of such a cabinet was opposed by the nationalists and this resistance was successful.

Because of these circumstances, the first cabinet of Mustaufi ul-Mamalik and subsequently that of Mushir ud-Daulah had no alternative but to choose the policy of neutrality. The maintenance of neutrality was the greatest problem which they had to confront. They received no friendly replies to their appeals. The Allies had underestimated Iran's role in the war and neither paid much attention to the hatred of the Iranian public opinion against themselves nor to the Iranian Government's request. Especially for Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, who presented the policy to the Majlis, there might have been a possibility of pursuing a harder line in order to put pressure on the Allies for a



mild attitude towards Iran. For instance a general call to maintain the neutrality seemed possible because the atmosphere of the country required a positive policy and the government's appeals to the people would have received considerable support. Mustaufi had also popularity in the country to unite the people. He was able to increase the central government's authority and to receive complete support from all over the country. In the extraordinary situation created by the war and with the Majlis' support he could have passed any law concerning foreign interests in Iran or internal affairs. On the contrary, he decreased the government's authority and allowed the Germans and Turks the same freedom to interfere that the Allies had.

Whatever the Turko-German policy was, they found a suitable ground for their propaganda and tried to get the most out of it. German gold had undoubtedly considerable attraction for some groups but it would be unfair and unjust to consider that all the inclinations of the Iranian people and nationalists towards the Germans and Turks and against the British and Russians were just for the sake of gold. The tendency of the nationalists towards the Central Powers was not because of their attraction but due to the Russian and British policy in Iran.

Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, in his second cabinet, used the growth of Turkish and German influence and public agitation as two factors to push the Allies to come round to the table of negotiation. Due to the government's financial problems and the conservative attitude of Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, the Allies followed the old policy of the carrot and stick, depending on the ebb and flow of the war in favour of or against the Allies. They also had realised that the importance of Iran was much more than they had anticipated. The basic aims of the

Allies in Iran concentrated on three points: firstly, to deter Iran from joining the opposition; secondly, to keep Iran in a state of instability; thirdly, to gain time. Eventually they were able to obtain all three.

Although Mustaufi ul-Mamalik had the intention of concluding an alliance with the Central Powers he spent a long time before he understood that they were not able or did not desire to commit themselves in their undertakings. Time passed without any result, exactly as the Allies wished. There was enough time for the Russians to despatch adequate troops into Iran to deal with any opposition forces.

As the Allied activities had no limitation, the Germans and Turks had the same privileges, in addition to the support of public opinion, which enabled them to bring under their influence most of the important cities of Iran, and to threaten the capital. The reaction of the Allies to the German-Turkish menace was the advance of Russian forces towards Tehran, and this produced the Muhajirat.

It seems that the founder of the Muhajirat was Mustaufi ul-Mamalik, but there has been some speculation as to whether or not he achieved his purpose, whether he wanted just to deter Russian troops from occupying the capital or to get rid of pro-Central Power groups. It was evident that Mustaufi was in favour of joining the Allies in his last days in office and he used the Muhajirin to persuade them to come to an agreement with Iran, but the Muhajirin went beyond his control. The situation was indeed very complicated. Although the British and Russian Governments took Mustaufi's proposal into consideration, it was obvious that they would not consent to all the conditions. The main purpose of the Allies in negotiating with the Iranian Government



was to gain time, as later on, when they were confident of their superiority, they disregarded Farmān Farmā's request for an alliance. However, Mustaufī had no chance. The situation would have had to have become extraordinarily important and vital to the Allies to bring them to some sort of agreement in favour of Iran, and the Iranian Government was too cautious to take any risk and create such conditions for the Allies. The idea of an alliance at the time was unfortunate. Firstly, the Allies had the ability to deal with any opposition; secondly, the enmity of people and the activities of anti-Allied groups had gone too far to be appeased by a government request without having any assurance.

There was another option; the result of the war was not yet known; the Iranian Government had planned to have friendly relations with the belligerent countries, and therefore Iran could at any rate be on the winning side.

The declaration of the Shah and his government, in which they stated that they would leave the capital as a protest against the advance of Russian troops on Tehran, was the main ground for the Muhājirat, which caused the participation of many people from all classes of the community in the capital. The 7th of Muharram 1333/ 15th November 1915 is a unique day in the history of Iran. A remarkable demonstration of the characteristic movement of the Iranian nationalists took place against the violation of the Russian troops and the oppressive policy of both powers in Iran.

The change of the Shah's decision left the Muhājirīn on their own. The establishment of the National Committee at Qom was the first step in organising their affairs. They expected the Iranian Government to reach an agreement with the Allies in which the independence

and integrity of Iran would be guaranteed. The Russian troops would be immediately withdrawn from Iranian territory and the Allies would assist the Iranian Government to maintain its neutrality. As far as Tehran was concerned, the second point was out of the question at the time. The first point apparently might be obtained if Iran joined the Allies, but the third point would be disregarded. Consequently the friction between Qom and Tehran increased and now Iran, on the one hand, was on the German side, but on the other tended towards the Allies. It was neither neutral nor at war, but received all its disastrous consequences.

The total inclination of the Muhājirīn towards the Germans and Turks was inevitable. They needed their assistance from every aspect, money, arms and advisers, and expected the German or Turkish army to arrive. The Muhājirīn were accused of being a tool in the Turkish and German hands. They were criticised for many years afterwards and the basic reason for all the accusations was that they were on the losing side in the war.

Without any agreement between Tehran and Qom, the Iranian Government succumbed to the British and Russian domination. The Allied Ministers almost took control over the Iranian Government's affairs. Farmān Farmā's cabinet, and subsequently Sipahsālār's and his agreement with the Allies, left no hope in the Tehran government for the future and the independence of Iran.

In general the Muhājirat and their supporters were composed of very odd and heterogeneous groups and individuals. They had many different sorts of interests, but most of them shared one attitude: to rise against the Russian and British exploitation. They fought, were wounded, suffered and died together.



Contrary to the claims of the Allies and the government of Tehran, the Muhājirīn tried to prove that not only did they not have any intention against the sovereignty of the country, but they were in fact determined to protect it.

Despite the fact that the Muhājirīn relied on the Germans and Turks completely, nevertheless they tried to keep their principles in every respect.

From the political point of view, the Muhājirīn were well aware of the importance of the situation in the country. They endeavoured to show their ability to control the country's affairs and acted as responsible authorities. In their agreements with the Central Powers, such as those between the Moderate Party, and Germany, Nizām us-Saltānah and Count Kanitz, and the Provisional Government and the Central Powers, all indicated that the independence and integrity of Iran had been assured, and Iran would have received considerable privileges. Moreover, Nizām us-Saltānah required all the privileges in the treaty, even if the Shah remained neutral.

From the military point of view, the Muhājirīn fought with the least military equipment to their utmost ability. In the battles of Avāj, Rubāṭ Karīm and especially Bīd-i Surkh, the National Army demonstrated remarkable resistance. The bravery and resistance of the gendarmerie forces in all the battles against the Russian troops indicated their determination to defend their country and their nationalistic attitude.

Public opinion, which should be considered as the most powerful factor of the Iranian political spirit, was in favour of the Muhājirīn and gave them tremendous sympathy, even though the government of Tehran was acting against the Muhājirīn and there was fear of

chastisement by the Russian troops for any help or assistance to the Muhājirīn; but nevertheless, the Iranian people responded to the Muhājirīn's request for support quite enthusiastically.

Due to the military superiority of the Russians and the inability of the Turks and Germans to despatch adequate military assistance for the Muhājirīn, the National Army tolerated frequent defeats and had to retreat as far as the Turkish border; this ended with the disorganisation of the army. Some groups of the National Army, in company with many of the Muhājirīn, left the country, going to Turkish territory, hoping for another opportunity to return.

They returned in company with Turkish troops and reorganised the Provisional Government and re-established its administration. Although some gendarmerie forces and western tribes participated in the battle with the Turkish troops against the Russians and the Provisional Government did their utmost to reorganise the National Army, they were not able to gather their previous support. But as to political and administrative aspects, under those circumstances, the Provisional Government was reasonably successful. Besides the conclusion of a treaty with the Central Powers, they used their influence in Istanbul to deter the occupation of Tehran by Turkish troops.

Despite some criticism, Nizām us-Salṭānah was the only reliable person who accepted the responsibility for the leadership of the Muhājirīn and the Provisional Government. As far as the treaties were concerned, his government obtained considerable advantages for Iran. Apparently, they tried to do their best in the circumstances.

The importance of the Muhājirat and the National Government of Kermanshah, which in fact revealed the spirit of the Iranian nationalists, could be better understood if the result of the war had turned out



differently or if the Russian Revolution had not occurred. However, the Muhājirīn movement showed that it would not be easy for the British and Russians to take over Iran with no resistance from the Iranian people. The Muhājirīn movement was followed by other nationalistic movements in Iran. In the north, there were uprisings led by Mīrzā Kūchik Khān, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Khān Pasiyān in Khurasan and Shaykh Muḥammad Khiyābānī at Tabriz. In the south, tribal agitations against British forces indicated a current nationalist movement in Iran. Afterwards the Muhājirīn were able to insert one article in favour of Iran in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed on 3rd March 1918, by which the Russians and Turks should withdraw their troops from Iranian territory. The Muhājirīn took part in activities of the Iranian Government and other nationalists for Iran to take part in the peace conference, but the British Government was opposed to this. They also took the hardest line against the Anglo-Iranian agreement of 9th August 1919. However, as Aḥmad Shāh stated, the Muhājirīn were his rebellious patriots of the country.

# APPENDIX I

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- 348 Declaration of Iranian neutrality in the war - "‘Aṣr-i Jadīd", No. 6, Zī Ḥijjah 1332.
- 349-50 Comments on the declaration of neutrality - "Parvardīn", Nos. 13 and 14, 1333.
- 351 Āyat Allāh Ḥusayn Burāzjānī's letter to the British Viceroy at the Persian Gulf - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 5, No. 32, 1333.
- 352 Iranian Government's letter of protest against British occupation of Bushire and against letter stamp "Bushire under British Occupation" - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 31, No. 117, 1333.
- 353 Schunemann's proclamation in Kermanshah - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 6, No. 61, 1333.
- 354 Declaration of jihād by the ‘ulamā’ - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 7, No. 104, 1333.
- 355 Orders of Āqā Mīrzā, one of the ‘ulamā’, to the people to assist the government by paying the sahm-i imām - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 5, No. 22, 1333.
- 356 An Allied propaganda broadsheet - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 5, No. 31, 1333.
- 357 British Minister's request for the suspension of "Naubahār" - I.F.O., C. 62, f. 5, No. 4, 1333.
358. Iranian Government's reply to the request of the Russian Embassy for the suspension of "Naubahār" - I.F.O., C. 62, f. 5, No. 11, 1333.
- 359 Aḥmad Shah's letter to the Russian Emperor and the British King - I.F.O., C. 66, f. 90, No. 41, 1333.
- 360 Iranian Government's telegram indicating the friendly relations between the Iranian Government and the British and Russian Governments - Private papers of Nizām us-Saltānah
- 361 Russian military proclamation in Kermanshah - I.F.O., C. 44, f. 6, No. 17, 1334.
- 362 Russian proclamation about censoring letters in Hamadan - I.F.O., C. 29, f. 15, No. 2, 1334.
- 363 Sipahsālār's agreement to the Allied request for a treaty - I.F.O., C. 26, f. 16, No. 43, 1334.
- 364 Proclamation in Hamadan by ‘Alī Iḥsān Pāshā, the Turkish Commander - I.F.O., C. 43, f. 10, No. 32, 1334.
- 365-66 Letters of Nizām us-Saltānah to his family - Private papers of Nizām us-Saltānah.
- 367 Map showing the revision (1915) of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907.
- 368 Map showing the routes of the Muhājirīn and the author.



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# پایتخت

## فرمان همایونی راجع به بیطرفی دولت علیه



الملك لله

السلطان ابن السلطان احمد شاه قاجار

نظر باینکه در این اوقات متأسفانه بین دول اروپ نایره جنگ مشتمل است و ممکن است این محاربه بحدود مملکت ما نزدیک شود و نظر باینکه روابط و دادیه ما بحد الله با دول متخاصمه برقرار است برای اینکه عموم اهالی از نیات ما در حفظ و صیانت این روابط حسنه نسبت به دول متحاربه مطلع باشند امر و مقرر میفرمائیم که جناب مستطاب اجل اشرف اکرم افخم مهین دستور معظم مستوفی الممالک رئیس الوزراء و وزیر داخله فرمان ملوکانه را بفرمان فرمایان و حکام و مامورین دولت ابلاغ دارند که دولت ما در این موقع مسالک بیطرفی را اتخاذ و روابط دوستانه خود را با دول متخاصمه کما کان حفظ و صیانت مینماید و بدین لحاظ مامورین دولت را باید متوجه نمایند که نباید وجهاً من الوجوه برا و بحر اکمک بهراهی و یا ضدیت هریک از دول متخاصمه نموده و یا اسلحه و ادوات حریه برای یکی از طرفین تدارک و یا حمل کنند و باید از طرف داری با هر کدام از دول متحاربه پرمیز و احتراز نموده مسالک بیطرفی دولت



### اخطار از طرف

آقای مدیر محترم عصر جدید

در این موقع که متأسفانه نایره جنگ اکثر دول اروپا مشتمل است دولت ما هاشم شاه روابط و دادیه دوستی خود را با تمام آنها حفظ نموده و بی طرفی خود را اعلان و اعلام نموده است برای حفظ این لازم است ارباب جرید که در واقع زیر نیات مقدس ملوکانه و مسالک دولت را نمایند لهذا وزارت بهار مواد ذیل را به ارباب جرید کرده و اجرای آنها را محصور می نماید.

اخبار راجع بوقایع جنگ را می نمایند از منابع موخه بوده و ذکر نمی جریده بنمایند منابع موخه عبارتند از (۱) نشریه دیپلماتیک (۲) آژانسهای رسمی اخبار نقل از روزنامهجات فارجه با ذکر اسم روزنامه از نوشتن اخبار خصوصی که در محاوره و مختلفه مجوز مکاتبات خودشان از دور را رودر حسن شوری راجع بوقایع جنگ مینویسند اکیداً باید منع و پس از آن نمایند وزیر معارف و علوم

در روز شنبه ۱۱ ذی حجه بمناسبت جشن افتتاح مریضخانه آمریکانها از طرف محترم امور مریضخانه دعوت مفصلی بعمل آمده بود - محرمه اکبر میرزا آقایان وزراء عظام و معاونین به سرور مسافرت - وزرای مختار دول ملحقه وعده زیادی از محرمه محمود بن فرزند و اعیان برای تماشای اینجانب جدید الاحداث - محرمه - محرمه

متبوعه خورا کاملاً رعایت نمایند و در تکمیل حفظ بیطرفی و صیانت روابط حسنه باز آنچه هیئت دولت ما مصلحت دانند و بمرض برسد در اجرای مقررات آن امر ملوکانه شرف صدور خواهد یافت .

۱۲ شهر ذی حجه الحرام ۱۳۳۲

بنسبیت بارندگی جمعه گذشته حسب الامر اعلیحضرت اقدس همایونی اسب دوانی بهمان پروگرام سابق در روز یکشنبه ۱۲ ذی حجه الحرام بعد از ظهر بعمل آمد و موکب مسعود مبارک اعلیحضرت اقدس شهرباری بعد از ظهر روز مزبور از قصر سلطنت آباد بشهر تشریف فرما شده و بعد از ظهر بیدان مشق برای تماشای اسب دوانی تشریف برده و قریب سه ربع بفروب مانده بقصر سلطنت آباد مراجعت فرمودند .

جلسه هیئت وزرای عظام در هفله گذشته تقریباً همه روزه در قصر ابیض تشکیل و غالب شب را تا ساعت سه و چهار مشغول بوده اند



شماره پانزدهم سال سوم



(این مریض و دین دار را سوار روی) (که در آینه مستقری خوش و نامزد) (از قضا سر خمین سوار است) (ازین بادم خنکی می نمود)

پس سبب هر حال این مدت دلال و الزام گیرید  
 بر یک دفعه کم شاید اولاد بعد از شما  
 مدح و باطن پستان کار می کنند

مادری الوصل دوستی خالو خریست  
 من بختی هم با پخته خدا و کبر

حالت بیطرفی

می است صد را این لعلی تم

کند به کجالت وین باش طوط

اوراد سدا و سیم

جان خواهد داد تا از جان

این بختی حق

چو بید









## آقایان

که ما شاه خدمت حضرات آقایان حجج اسلام دامت رضا نهم و آقایان نجار و کسبه و اعلیٰ محترم با کمال توقیر و احترام زحمت میدهد به ملاحظه اینکه دولت قریب شوکت ایران در ابتدای جنگ اروپا اعلان بی طرفی نمود و بنسبت علیه حفظ شئون و احترام مسکن و نفی رعایا و مامورین دولت مخیمه آلمان از کتبه ایالات ایران موکول به بدو زمامداران دولت علیه ایران شد ولی متأسفانه مامورین دولت روس و انگلیس اعلان و ابطال بی طرفی ایران را بواسطه دستگیر نمودن رعایا و مامورین دولت متبرع ما و اعدام و تعذیب و تنگید آنان در ایالات آذربایجان و خراسان و شهرهای بوشهر و بهبهان و غیره فراهم آوردند هر چند از جنبه های دولت و ملت نمیه ایران کمال تشکر و امتنان را داریم ولی متأسفانه در بعضی مواضع دولت علیه ایران باذیر از خطیبات غیر منطوره مستحضر شده که موقع اقدامات مجرانه گذشته و با اینکه نتوانسته جلوگیری لازم از احساسات معاندین ما به نماید بحدیکه سبب شده که رعایای آلمانی را در همه حاکم گرفته مطلوب و محبوباً بمالك خود اعزام داشتند که سهل است در حین ورود این جانب بکرمانشاه رسماً برای دوستدار اعلام جنگ نمودند حتی در موقع ورود دوستدار بمحل مأموریت خردم در این سدد بودند که مرا دستگیر نمایند ولی چون بمقصود خویش نایل نشدند چنان صلاح دیدند از کرمانشاه رداع بگویند حال که قصد مبادت کرمانشاه را دارند گویا میخواهند بواسطه دیگر بمقصود سابق خویش موفق شوند این است که لازم میدانیم بموجب این لایحه اعلای نظامی و غیر نظامی دولت علیه ایران و مخصوصاً ادارات و رؤسای ایرانی بر یککد قزاق را اعلام بدارم که ما مجبور شده ایم از توبه مامورین خود با ملاحظه روابط دوستانه ایران و حفظ مسکن و اموال رعایای ایرانی مدافعه نمایم و مخصوصاً جملو آنتریکهای روس و انگلیس را که بدو انواعه چند نفر از بستگان ما را در این صفحات مقتول داشته اند مسدود ساخته و بناده بر این نگذاریم که معاندین تکرار نظایر اینگونه بملاحظات را نموده و تولید يك انقلاب خانه برانداز در این صفحات بنمایند لهذا خواهش مندیم که اعلای آن سامان اعم از نظامی و غیر نظامی رعایت و احترام بی طرفی مملکت خود را نموده در مدافعه مشروعه ما و منازعه غیر مشروعه روس و انگلیس سهم و شریک نباشند و مخصوصاً خدمت از آقایان محترم خاطر نشان نمایم در هر موقعی که معاندین ما ملاحظه بی طرفی ایران را کردند و دست از اذیت و آزار رعایا و مامورین ما در ایالات مختلفه ایران کشیدند و مامورین رسمی و رعایا و اموال منسوبه را مسترد داشته و آنها را بمحل مأموریت خود عودت دادند و دولت علیه ایران را ضامن و متعهد عدم تکرار امثال حرکت سابقه خود قرار دادند ما بطوریکه همیشه بی طرفی دولت و ملت ایران را مقدس و محترم شمرده ایم با کمال رغبت و امتنان حاضریم که دست از مدافعه خردیم که اخبار در این صفحات بان مجبور شدیم هم باز بداریم

(توقیر و احترام شریفان)

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(رفق ششوی)

عثمانیها در این جنگ که میان درشاد و عیسوی یعنی آلمان و اطیش از یک طرف و دون متحد یعنی انگلیس و فرانسه و سایرین از طرف دیگر است داخل شده اند .  
از آنجا که کول خود ده اند زیر آلمانیه سعی میکنند هر دلی را که هست بکمر خود بیاورند چونکه نفس آخر شکست و هلاکت آنها رسیده است .

عثمانیها از حماقت خودشان وعده های این نصاری را که بخداوند یگانه اعتقادی ندارند باور کرده و بر اندکای شمشیر کشیده اند .

عثمانیها که از قدم دشمنان و از دست خودشان قوه محاربه ندارند و حالا اعراب را جمع میکنند که برای آنها بجنگند ولی این سعی ایشان پیشرفت نکرده .

از اتلان بهاد مانوس شدند زیرا اعراب حق نیستند که از آن حرف کول خورده و نوکر آلمان بشوند و بی که از سامین دعوت میشود که با ناری اتحاد کنند چطور ممکن است جهاد در میان بیاید .

طالع المانیها مکرر شده و با اسکایس که در هندوستان و مصر و آفریقا و سودان و ایران هزار مسلمانان را حمایت میکنند ، بیرون کنند .

جهادی در میان نیست زیرا که حتی يك ملت اسلامی هم با عثمانیها تفرق نشده بلکه برعکس آنها اسلامی در ستم را با اسکایس بر عثمانیها اعتراض کرده اند که چرا در جنگ داخل شده و برای امداد آلمان اینکار میکند .

باری شریف مکه عدم رضایت خود را اظهار نموده و استعاض کرده که در این کار داخل شود . آلمانیهایی پیروان قرآن نبیند نیستند رسول آلمان در دوش که هنگام خوردن خطبه در مسجد داخل شد و بعد از آن در باب جنگ با مردم صحبت داشت و قضا دین اسلام را . . . خیره کرده است . آلمانیهایی میگویند زمام اسلام در دست است ولی کسیکه اسلام را حمایت میکنند اسکایس است نه آلمان .

اسکایس حتی این روزها که با عثمانی جنگ دارد آذوقه و ذخایر بکمی میفرستد تا اینکه حرمین شریفین بدرود کربلای بستان شوند .

آیا آلمان با عثمانی میتواند بگوید همچو کاری کرده است ؟

آیا رؤساء ملت عثمانی از حکومت حالیه که در اسلامبول است حمایت میکنند ؟

بن حکمرانی که در اسلامبول است و تا از درجه آلمان را دوست میدارد که تحت فرمانش رفته چیست ؟

و اما آیا این حکومت را . . . خیره کرده و آنها را مثل يك بچه زیر فرمان خود آورده

آیا اعراب تا آن درجه تر که ارا دوست دارند که از آنها کول خورده و در این جنگ فرمانبردار آنها بشوند ؟

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مهر ۱۰



جناب سبط لبراکم فہم

دستہ چہانیت دیرآ دہرام با طرودت لک ہر جناب سبط لبراکم دہرام

دزدانک برتہ جریہ زہار دہرام ۵۸ ہر دہرام دہرام دہرام (دہرام دہرام)

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# اعلان

( از طرف رئیس اردوی دولت بهیبه امپراطوری ژنرال پرنس پولسکی یلازوسکی )  
( بموس امالی کرمانشاهان از شهری و دهاتی مراد ذیل اعلام و اخبار میشود )

نشین منصوره امپراطوری شهر کاشان و امشک را بنصرف خود درآورده است.

بنامت اینکه در اوایل شهر جمادی الاولی عده از باغبان ارکاد در قطعه مضافاتی دشت به پیش  
قره ولبای مالدات امپراطوری هفتاد هجوم و یک قر دست گیر نموده بودند لهذا نسبت به حرکات  
این باغبان امر به تخریب و کوییدن قره ( بلا ) و ( کاواره ) و تلف نمودن ارکاد صادر شد. و قریب  
شصت قر از ارکاد را در این جنگ کشته و ابرود نمودند

در قطعه مضافات باغبان اعظم السلطه باز بنای حیان و همذگی را گذارده. عده از افراد اردوی  
منصوره امپراطوری به آن باغبان هجوم آورده ( ۲۹۶ ) قرا را با شمشیر تلف نموده و باغبان را غائب  
نموده تا اینکه از آب ( کاماسباب ) گذشت و در آن مضافات از طرف اردوی امپراطوری چند قره  
که جنس اعظم السلطه بوده تماماً کوییده و خراب نموده اند. و در تاریخ ۲۳ جمادی الاولی در قطعه  
قله ( کرم الله خان ) بواسطه مساعدات جنگی باغبان با افراد اردوی امپراطوری که تقریباً مدت  
چهار ساعت مشغول جنگ بوده در اینجا نیز بمسد قرا از تابان اعظم السلطه تلف شده است

به تمام اشخاص با بصیرت که متع از پولسک منوات اخیر هستند یادآوری مینماید - از زمانی که  
دولت آلمان پرستار و مراقب احوال دولت عثمانی بوده دولت عثمانی در تحت حمایت این پرستار عالی در جنگ  
ما بطل تمام املاک خود که در آنوقت بود از دست داد و دولت آلمان باینکه دولت ایتالیا از حیدرین  
خود بوده مشارالیه را از این حرکت منع نموده - در جنگ با تکان نظر به پرستاری دولت آلمان  
از دولت عثمانی باز قسمت بزرگی از منسلکات وی که در اوربا بود بردند و دولت عثمانی عزت  
و قدرت خود را بکلی از دست داده و کم نموده - و حایه خیالات عثمانیان بر اینست بلکه سعی نموده  
ببراند یک نسبتی از املاک که در جنگهای مابین در اطراف قفقاز کم نموده بدست یاورند و آلبانیها  
با این خیالات موهم عثمانی را تشویق و تفریب نموده و در ضمن قصد اساسی آنها این بود بواسطه  
حرکت عثمانیان بطرف قفقاز لابد از ( فروت مغرب ) دولت امپراطوری عده برای جلوگیری از  
عثمانیان بطرف قفقاز سوق خواهند داشت و بدین واسطه استفاده برای آلبانیها بشود - و شبیه تمام خیالات  
آنها این شد که امپریزه اردوی منصوره امپراطوری در اطراف ( طرایزون ) ( پای بود ) که در  
داخله اراضی عثمانی است ترقف دارند و بملاوه ( ارض روم ) ( رومش ) ( ویتلیس )  
که از املاک دولت عثمانی بود بنصرف در آورده اند - و دولت عثمانی بواسطه پرستار ( ۲۰ ) به  
آلبانیها حالت الامر ویرا به پرتگاه هولای رسانیدند - و ما قریب شصتین دولت امپراطوری بنیاد  
را نیز بنصرف خود خواهند آورد - خوب است اشخاص با اطلاع از احوال تاریخ عالم متذکر  
باشند که آبا تمام این ضربهای که بدولت عثمانی وارد آمده بواسطه که بوده است - و بداند که  
به مال هر یک که طرف دار دشمنان ما بوده به کثیر اعمال خود خواهد رسید

تاریخ بیست و هتم جمادی الاول ۱۳۴۴  
( ژنرال پرنس پولسکی یلازوسکی )

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## اعلان

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حسب ارجاس جلالتا جل زلال ابراست درنده دل و امیر غوری

دولت سیه روس از امر و زبید و فرست ای قلمی این سال و حمله شد

نزد در مقام اطلاع بر آیه و خاطر معلوم در دست خضر من که بهر نقطه

که که غده نبیند سر بکت ای خود را با بر آیه شد و بر فرست ایال در

معلوم است اگر بار غده از بر کرد ما سر بکت با باز خواهند

رئیس و فرست حدید



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همدان

تاریخ ۱ شنبه ۲۷ شهر شوال ۱۳۳۴

برای رفع و ازاله سوء تفهیمات عموم اهالی طهران و رجال حاضر و سابقه و بشام  
 مأمورین و نظامیان و اهالی ایران خطاباً اعلان می نمایم که مقصد حرکات اردوی اسلامی  
 عثمانی که در تحت فرماندهی من است فقط خلاص کردن حکومت و اهالی ایران از  
 جنگل ابدیت و استبدادی روسها و تحکیم استقلال و تمامیت مملکت ایران است در خاک  
 حکومت ایران ابداً طبعی نداریم از آن جائی که روسها ایران را در تحت مظالم و  
 استبدادی خود آورده و با ظلم ها و تخریبات استقلال شکستنه از هیچ گونه تجاوزات  
 نسبت به حکومت و مأمورین و رجال ایران به فرو گذار نکرده و حراً آن ها را بکار  
 های بد و اذیت آورده و امتیازات ناکوار از آن ها گرفته و اعلیحضرت سلطان احمد  
 شاه را در زیر فشار و اسارت گرفته و باجبرای کارهای نالایق و اذیت آورده و  
 نسبت بدین اسلام تحقیراتی که نمودند دیگر بدرجه انتهی رسیده بود دولت مظلومه اسلامی  
 عثمانی که مسایه ممدین و هم عرق ایران بود فقط برای استخلاص برادران دینی خود  
 از این ظلم مجبور بانجام شده است مقصد ما این قدر عالی است و بیت ما بول گرفتن  
 از کسی نیست از آن جائی که تا حال در زمان روس ها رجال و مأمورین ایران بجزیر و  
 فشار خواهی لخواهی بافکار آن ها خدمت کرده بودند بجا معلوم شد که همه این ها از  
 روی جبر بوده است

لذا باین ها هم اگر چنان چه قبل هرایی داشته باشند سوء معامله ندیده و این  
 آرزوی آن ها قبول شده و با عنو مقابله خواهند دید شاید این مسئله رفتن رات  
 حایه ما است با ولایاتی که از دست روسها گرفته ایم می کشیم حاکم کردند را در  
 جای خودش گذاشتیم و پس از ورود ما به کرمات شاه بنای فتنه و فساد را  
 گذاشت لهذا مجبوراً عزائش کردم حاکم کرمات شاه با روس ها فرار کرده و به جای  
 خود عودت نکرد چاکم که ناکاور را در جای خودش گذاشتیم امیر افخم حاکم  
 همدان از ترس فرار کرده بود از آن جائی که امان آورد عیوش کردم و به طور  
 آزادانه می تواند در همدان حرکت کند چه بیات و افکار حکومت عثمانیه و چه  
 افکار رجال حکومت ایرانیه که با ما هستند در این سرگز بوده و نام رؤسای ایلات  
 ایران هم در این حصر با ما هم فکرتند اسامی من و اردوی من این حرف های  
 خودمان را در هر زمان و مکان اجرا کرده و مقتدر به رفع مخالفین این فکر هستیم  
 بغیر و اغفال هیچیک از ایرانی و روس و غیره اعتنا نکرده از فکر حقیقی ما  
 اشتباه حاصل نکرده و برای بیرون کردن روس ها از مملکت خودمان با ما هم  
 فکر شده و با دست اتحاد برای طرد روس ها به کوشیم

مأمور نمایم ایران فرمانده اردوی اسلامی (علی احسان)

سال ۱۳۳۴

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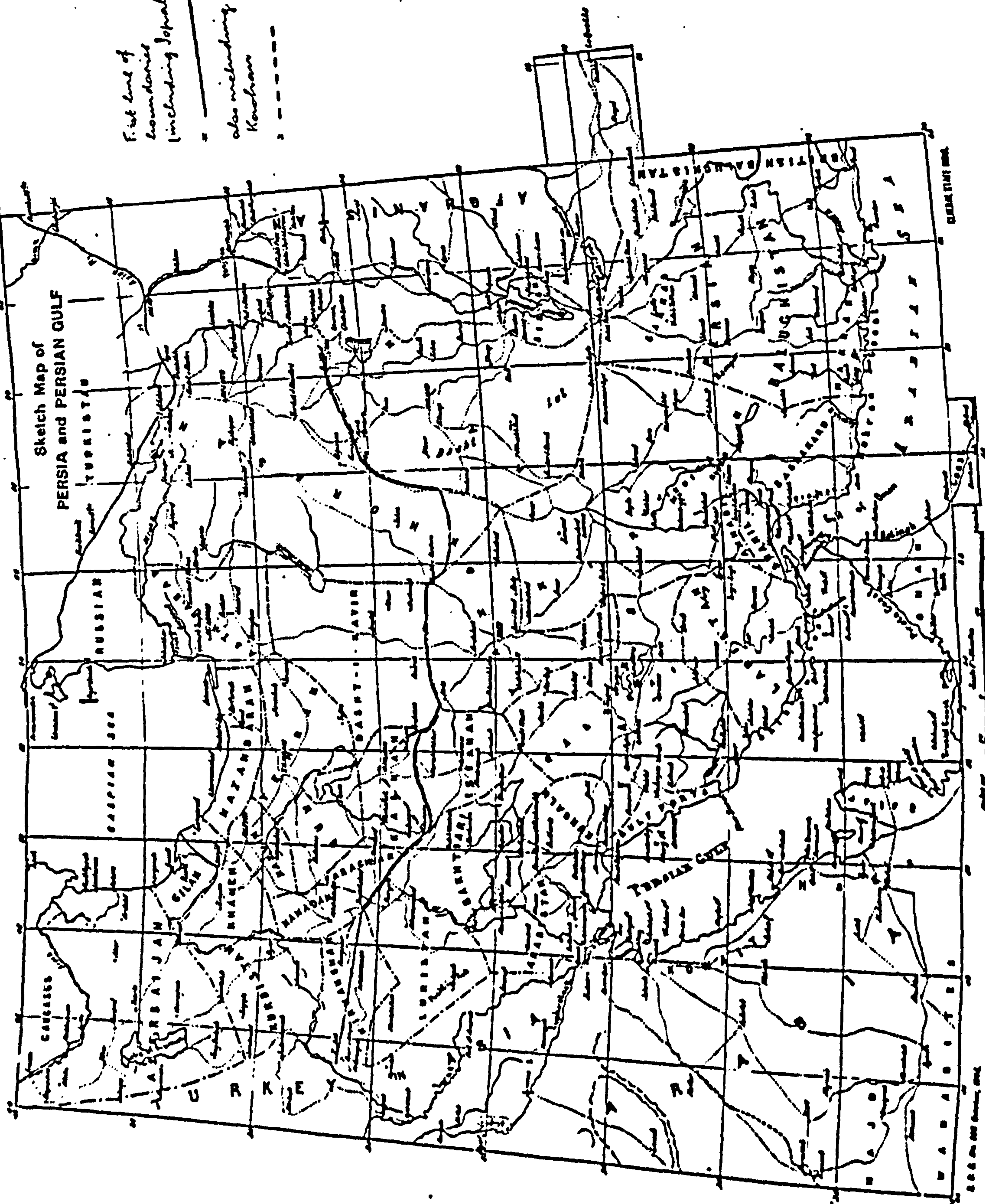




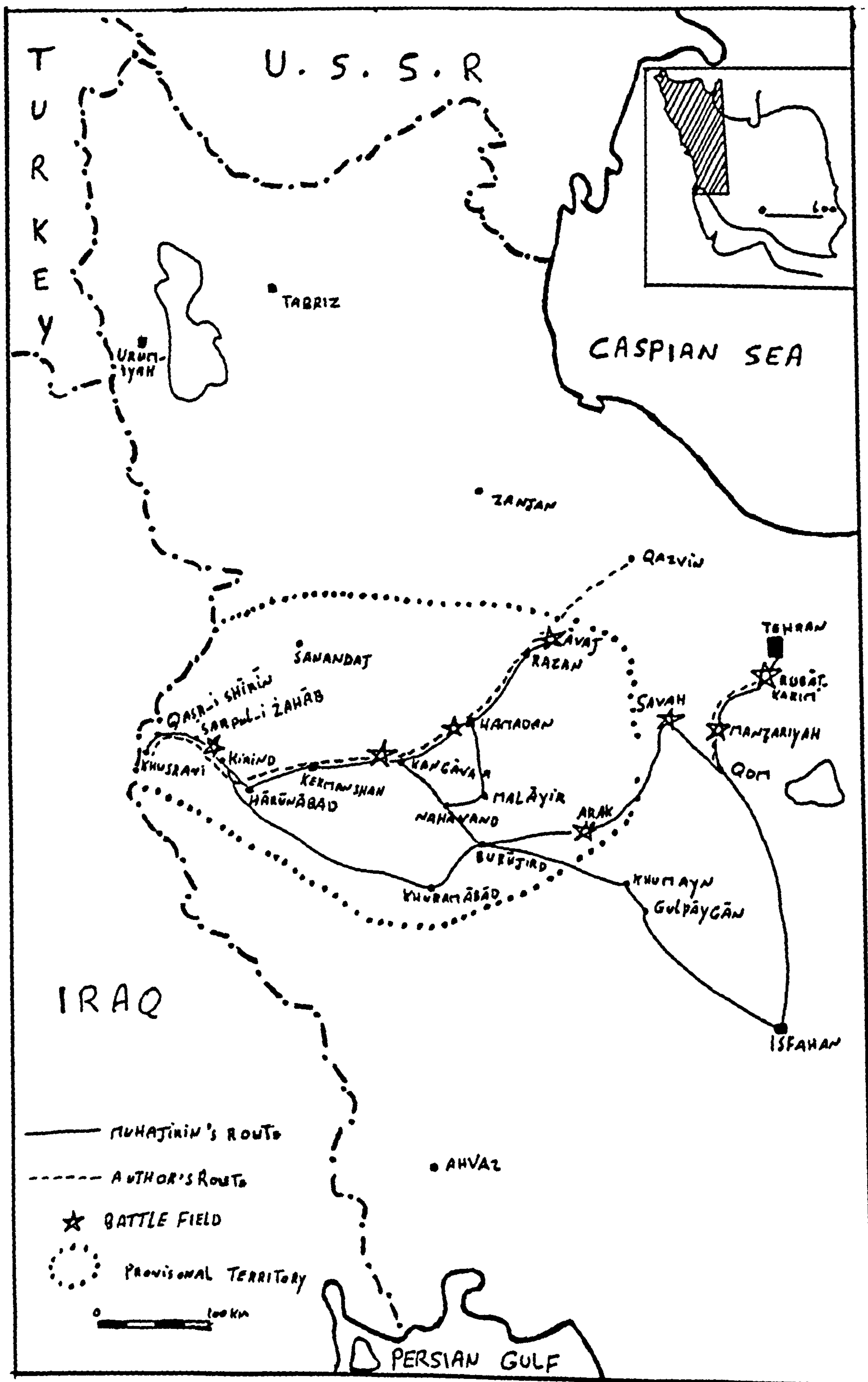


First level of  
boundaries  
(including Jopahan)

also including  
Kashan







## APPENDIX II

### PERSONAL INTERVIEWS



The first step in these interviews was to explain their purpose and what kind of information was desired. It was pointed out that they were required to talk only about the events which they had witnessed or in which they had taken part. The main points of each interview can be divided into three parts:

1. Personal information about the person and his position at the time of the interview and during the war.
2. General information about his place of residence during the war, such as the names of governors, 'ulamā', nobles, khāns, Majlis deputies; an explanation about his living conditions during the war.
3. Incidents which had happened during the war.
  - a) Had he heard of the declaration of jihād; if so, what were the reactions of him and other inhabitants of the area?
  - b) Was he a member of a political party; if so, why and what were his activities?
  - c) What was his opinion of the Muhājirat, the condition of the country, various leaders, parties and governments?
  - d) What was his opinion of the belligerent countries' policies in Iran, especially when his place of residence was occupied by foreign troops?

Due to the circumstances in Iran at the time of the interviews, most of the people were very careful and cautious, if not suspicious, although most consented to having the entire interview taped. Many tried to avoid answering questions which might have been interpreted as having some connection with the present day. In general, those who lived in small towns or villages did not like talking about questions 3(a), 3(b), and to some extent 3(c); those who lived in cities were hesitant about 3(d) and sometimes 3(c).

I would like to thank all the people I interviewed for their kindness and assistance.

|   | City and Date of Interview (Day and Month) 2536 Sh. | Name          | Surname and Title             | Place and Date of Birth or approximate age | Occupation at time of interview      | Occupation and place of residence during the war | Incidents witnessed or participated in during the war  |
|---|---|---------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Tehran 13-8   | Muhammad      | Nizām Māfi, Nizām us-Saltānah | Tehran AD 1887                             | Former Senator                       | Deputy for Luristan Tehran                       | Took part in the Muhājirat and was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Government of Kermanshah  |
| 2 | Tehran 18-1-37                                      | Aman Allāh    | 'Ardalān, 'Izz ul-Mamālīk     | Tehran 1286                                | Senator                              | Deputy for Kermanshah Tehran                     | Took part in the Muhājirat and was appointed Minister for Public Utilities in the Provisional Government of Kermanshah |
| 3 | Qom 22-12   | Sayyid 'Alī   | Da'vatī                       | Hamadan 1280 H.S.                          | Teacher                              | Student Hamadan                                  | Witnessed events of 1914-17 in Hamadan   |
| 4 | Qom 22-12   | Arbāb Ḥasan   | Girāmīyān                     | Tehran 1316                                | Tobacco-nist                         | Student Qom                                      | Witnessed events in Qom during the war   |
| 5 | Qom 22-12   | 'Alī Muḥammad | Bihishtī                      | Qom 1308                                   | Retired Employee of Finance Ministry | Overseer   | Witnessed events in Qom during the war   |



|    |                         |                    |  |  |  |
|----|-------------------------|--------------------|--|--|--|
| 6  | Hamadan Aḥmad<br>2-12   | Mukhbīr<br>uṣ-Ṣafā | Hamadan Retired<br>90 yrs.                           | Merchant<br>Hamadan  | Witnessed events in Hamadan during the war   |
| 7  | Hamadan Ḥusayn<br>2-12  | Bakhtiyārī         | Hamadan Live-<br>stock<br>owner                      | Livestock<br>owner<br>Hamadan                                  | Witnessed events in Hamadan during the war;<br>Fought with Russian troops and was wounded<br>three times |
| 8  | Asad-<br>ābād<br>4-12   | Jamālī             | Asad-<br>ābād<br>1313<br>Farmer                      | Accountant<br>for Farmān<br>Farmā's<br>property in<br>Asadābād | Witnessed events in Asadābād during the war  |
| 9  | Kangā-<br>var<br>28-11  | Yūsufī             | Kangā-<br>var<br>1303<br>Retired                     | Cloth<br>Seller<br>Kangāvar                                    | Witnessed events in Kangāvar during the war  |
| 10 | Kangā-<br>var<br>28-11  | Sārī<br>Aṣlānī     | Kangā-<br>var<br>1275<br>H.S.<br>Retired<br>Employee | Land<br>owner<br>Kangāvar                                      | Witnessed events in Kangavar during the war  |
| 11 | Ṣaḥnah<br>16-11         | Zū n-Nūrī          | Ṣaḥnah Farmer<br>96 yrs.                             | Farmer<br>Ṣaḥnah   | Witnessed events in Ṣaḥnah during the war  |
| 12 | Kerman-<br>shah<br>8-11 | Ṭahmāsiyān         | Kerman-Grain<br>shah<br>1268<br>H.S.<br>dealer       | Grain<br>dealer<br>Kermanshah                                  | Witnessed events in Kermanshah during the war  |

|    |                             |                           |           |  |                                 |  |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 13 | Kerman-shah<br>8-11         | Muṣṭafā                   | Mahdavi   | Kerman-Doctor<br>shah<br>1281<br>H.S.          | Student<br>Kermanshah           | Witnessed events in Kermanshah during the war  |
| 14 | Kerman-shah<br>23-11        | Faraj<br>Allāh            | Mu'tamidī | Kerman-Lawyer<br>shah<br>1271<br>H.S.          | Govt.<br>Employee<br>Kermanshah | Member of Democrat party; took part in Muhājirat and supported Provisional Government in Kermanshah                  |
| 15 | Shāh-ābād<br>Gharb<br>17-11 | Muḥammad<br>'Alī          | Khusravī  | Shāh- Retired<br>ābād<br>Gharb<br>1271<br>H.S. | Baker                           | Savar of Savārān Nādirī organised at Kerman-shah; took part in battle of Bīd-i Surkh and was wounded in the left leg |
| 16 | Shāh-ābād<br>Gharb<br>17-11 | Yad Allāh                 | Vahdatī   | Kerman-Confectioner<br>shah<br>80 yrs.         | Apprentice                      | Witnessed events in Kermanshah during the war  |
| 17 | Kirind<br>24-11             | Sayyid<br>Muḥammad<br>Yār | Afzalī    | Kirind Retired<br>1272 Govt.<br>H.S. Employee  | Goods<br>Seller                 | Witnessed events in Kirind during the war  |
| 18 | Kirind<br>24-11             | Ibrāhīm                   | Khāmūshī  | Kirind Farmer<br>1278<br>H.S.                  | Farmer<br>Kirind                | Witnessed events in Kirind during the war  |
| 19 | Kirind<br>24-11             | 'Alī Murād                | Khāmūshī  | Kirind Farmer<br>140 yrs.<br>(?)               | Farmer<br>Kirind                | Witnessed events in Kirind during the war  |



|    |                           |                  |                     |  |                            |   |
|----|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------|---|
| 20 | Sarpul<br>Zahāb<br>27-11  | Sayyid<br>Sharīf | Husaynī             | Sarpul Farmer<br>Zahāb<br>1279<br>H.S.     | Farmer<br>Sarpul<br>Zahāb  | Witnessed events in Sarpul Zahāb during the<br>war      |
| 21 | Qaṣr-i<br>Shīrīn<br>26-11 | Nūr<br>Muḥammad  | Khān<br>Muḥammadī   | Qaṣr-i Farmer<br>Shīrīn<br>over<br>80 yrs. | Farmer<br>Qaṣr-i<br>Shīrīn | Witnessed events in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn during the<br>war     |
| 22 | Qaṣr-i<br>Shīrīn<br>26-11 | Hāj Majīd        | Muḥammadī-<br>zādah | Qaṣr-i Retired<br>Shīrīn<br>1272<br>H.S.   | Owner of<br>Kārvānsarāy    | Witnessed events in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn during the<br>war     |
| 23 | Qaṣr-i<br>Shīrīn<br>26-11 | Hāj Hamīd        | Muḥammadī-<br>zādah | Qaṣr-i Muleteer<br>Shīrīn<br>80 yrs.       | Muleteer                   | Witnessed events in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn during the<br>war     |
| 24 | Qaṣr-i<br>Shīrīn<br>27-11 | Muḥammad         | Iskandarī           | Qaṣr-i Garden<br>Shīrīn Owner<br>84 yrs.   | Farmer                     | Witnessed the events in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn during<br>the war |

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